

Paper D2

Marks of ministry

Education and learning committee

Basic information

Contact name and email address	The Revd Professor Neil Messer, Convenor neil.messer@winchester.ac.uk The Revd Fiona Thomas, Secretary fiona.thomas@urc.org.uk
Action required	Decision.
Draft resolution(s)	<ol style="list-style-type: none">Mission Council adopts this paper as the United Reformed Church's description of the marks of the Ministry of Word and Sacraments and in so doing replaces the 'Seven fundamental characteristics of ministry' adopted by General Assembly in 1982.Mission Council encourages the ministries and education and learning committees, Resource Centres for Learning, and relevant committees in all the synods to use this paper as the basis for consistency in expectations and reporting in relation to the Ministry of Word and Sacraments.

Summary of content

Subject and aim(s)	<p>The paper addresses what the Church expects of people exercising the Ministry of Word and Sacraments in contemporary times. The aim is to have a shared understanding which can be used across the Church, particularly in Education for Ministry Phases one, two and three as well as potentially in ministerial accompanied self-appraisal.</p> <p>Since 1982 much work has been done in relation to the parallel description of marks of ministry for Church Related Community Workers. Therefore this document refers only to the Ministry of Word and Sacraments.</p>
Main points	<p>The paper offers a concise and comprehensive description of what the Church can reasonably expect of people who are called to the Ministry of Word and Sacraments. What this looks like in each minister will vary depending on the context, the individual, and the specific ministry to which they are called.</p>
Previous relevant documents	<p>2016 General Assembly resolution 13 on 'Twenty first century expectations for ministry'; 2003 recommendations on CRCW core competencies accepted by the URC training committee;</p>

	1993 benchmarks for assessing the readiness for ministry of students by the URC training committee; 1982 General Assembly document ‘Seven fundamental qualifications for ministry (manual section K2).’
Consultation has taken place with...	Ministries committee, Synod Moderators’ meeting, Resource Centres for Learning.

Summary of impact

Financial	Not applicable.
External (e.g. ecumenical)	Not directly applicable, although there are similarities between the way in which the URC and its closest ecumenical partners view the Ministry of Word and Sacraments.

Marks of United Reformed Church Ministry of Word and Sacraments

A Minister of Word and Sacraments in the United Reformed Church (URC) should be:

- **A faithful disciple of Jesus Christ:** caught up in the joy and wonder of God’s will and work; seeking always to live a holy life in public and in private; sustained by their own rhythm of prayer, Bible reading and worship so that they might model and encourage such life-long patterns in others with integrity; open to learning discipleship from others.
- **A person of integrity and resilience:** self-aware and committed to their own lifelong learning (especially through the URC’s provision for ministers); aware of their own limitations and thus willing to seek support; ready to deal with situations of conflict; balancing ministry’s joys and pains with the fostering of right relationships with family and friends.
- **A contextual theologian:** delighting in Scripture, rooted in the Reformed tradition, able to communicate their own faith and its implications within and beyond congregations; encouraging others to discover how these rich resources inspire and sustain faithfulness.
- **A worship leader and preacher:** able to craft and lead worship that shows appreciation for the Sacraments and the resources of many traditions and styles yet unafraid to create and advocate new forms as appropriate; passionate and effective in breaking open God’s Word in preaching; ready and able to foster skills, techniques and experience in others so that they might lead worship and preach well.
- **A pastor:** sharing with others, especially Elders, in sustaining care; making time to walk in love alongside people; rejoicing and grieving with others through listening deeply and offering prayerful support; wise in knowing their limits and boundaries when more specialised help is needed; reliably dealing with issues of safeguarding and confidentiality.

- **A leader and collaborator:** identifying, developing, and enabling leadership in others, particularly Elders; capable of working in, and leading, teams through collaborative and shared leadership; aware of their own leadership style and open to learning with and from others, when necessary acknowledging their own mistakes and seeking restoration; committed and equipped to building up others in faith and witness so that the gifts and callings of all might flourish; demonstrating love for God's people.
- **A missionary and evangelist:** passionate about and active in sharing the love of God for the world; alive to the significance of contexts and cultures in shaping mission and creative in discovering missional opportunities; empowering and equipping God's people in mission to share the Gospel and live God's Kingdom of justice and peace to the full.
- **A public figure:** reliable and effective in representing the Church in ecumenical, community and wider settings; committed to and equipped in speaking truth to power and challenging injustice and marginalisation wherever they may be found.
- **A communicator:** who uses written, spoken and other modes with clarity and grace to share faith and build up relationships and communities; helping others to find their voice.
- **A committed participant in the councils of the Church:** responsive to God's call as gift and blessing to be lived out within the discipline and accountability of the denomination which trains, ordains and inducts them and the pastorates and ministries within which they serve.
- **A reformer:** wise in the dynamics and challenges of change; bold yet humble in helping individuals and congregations to discern and respond to the leading of the Holy Spirit as new chapters open in the life of the Church and others close.