



Women and the Church  
Affirming ✦ Challenging ✦ Transforming

# A Report on the Developments in Women's Ministry in 2019

# WATCH Women and the Church

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### Introduction

2019 was the 25th anniversary of women being ordained to the priesthood in the Church of England. These ordinations were spread from March to July, and were celebrated in various ways throughout the year: some dioceses held services of celebration, many women celebrated in their own parishes or places of ministry, a service from the chapel of Lambeth Palace was broadcast by Radio 4 and the "class of '94" were invited to two garden parties at Lambeth Palace by the Archbishop.

We also noted that July 2019 was the 40th anniversary of the founding of MOW, and the 50th anniversary of women being licensed as Lay Readers (now Licensed Lay Ministers).

Seven more women were appointed as suffragan bishops out of eight appointments. None of the three diocesan appointments were women. By the end of 2019, 17 out of 63 suffragan bishops are women, whilst the number of diocesan bishops remains at five.

It continues to be vital for women to be represented in all forms of leadership in the Church of England, and this is of wider importance than just within the church. Research in the USA\* discovered that experiencing the leadership of women religious leaders could close the self-esteem gap between men and women equivalent to a year of college education.

**This finding would suggest that the self-esteem gap between men and women might be eliminated entirely in a world where women have female clergy at least "some of the time" in their formative years. It would boost self-esteem for women to levels equivalent with men (if not slightly higher) while not perceptively changing self-esteem for men one way or the other.**

*She Preached the Word* p.131 Benjamin Knoll and Cammie Bolin OUP 2018

### TABLE 1: Proportion of stipendiary incumbents/incumbent status clergy who are women

This table shows the proportion of stipendiary incumbent and incumbent status roles in each diocese.

In 2013 half of dioceses had 23% of parish clergy who were women; in 2018 the median figure was 27%

In 2013 only seven dioceses had 30% or more (stipendiary) parish clergy who were women

In 2018 14 dioceses had 30% or over parish clergy who were women (15 dioceses in 2017)

We note some dioceses with the lowest proportions of women continuing to increase this proportion (eg Chichester, London)

We note other dioceses with no significant change in the proportion of women eg Rochester, Chester

Ely continues to have the highest proportion of stipendiary women incumbents. It is one of the only dioceses with a conscious strategy to encourage and support women, particularly young women, in stipendiary ministry.

### TABLE 2: Different roles within diocese [overleaf]

This table shows the proportion of stipendiary incumbent status clergy, the proportion of SSM clergy and the proportion of Area Deans who are women in each diocese.

NB Data for Stipendiary clergy and SSM clergy based on 2018 figures. Data for Area Deans updated to Dec 2019 (proportions for number of Area Deans are based on a small number of people so a change of one person can make a significant difference)

- SSM data does not distinguish between SSM clergy who hold another job (often paid); and those who have significant parish responsibilities

TABLE 1

Proportion of incumbents/ incumbent status who are women	2013		2015		2017		2018	
	40% and over	Ely	41	Ely	43	Ely	41	Ely
35%-39%	Hereford Ripon and Leeds	38 38			Liverpool Truro	35 37	Liverpool Salisbury	35 35
30%-34%	St Edmundsbury and Ipswich Manchester Peterborough Southwell	31 30 30 30	Hereford Truro Manchester Salisbury Southwell St Edmundsbury and Ipswich Peterborough Portsmouth Gloucester	34 33 32 32 32 32 31 31 31 30	Hereford Portsmouth St Eds and Ipswich Durham Gloucester Peterborough Lincoln Manchester Salisbury Southwell St Albans Worcester	33 32 32 31 31 30 30 32 30 30 30 30	Hereford Gloucester Norwich Peterboro' Portsmouth Truro Coventry Southwell Durham Manchester Leeds	34 33 32 32 32 32 31 31 30 30 30 30
25%-29%	Bath and Wells Sheffield Leicester St Albans Leeds Salisbury Chester Derby Gloucester Liverpool Portsmouth	29 29 28 28 26 26 25 25 28 25 25	Bath and Wells Liverpool Sheffield St Albans Durham Leeds Leicester Lincoln Worcester Derby Chester Chelmsford Norwich Oxford	29 29 29 29 27 28 28 28 27 27 26 25 25	Bristol Derby Leeds Leicester Guildford Sheffield Bath and Wells Norwich Chelmsford Chester Coventry Newcastle Oxford Southwark Birmingham	28 28 28 28 26 28 27 27 26 26 26 26 26 26 26	Lincoln Worcester St Eds and Ipswich Bath & Wells Chelmsford Newcastle Oxford Birmingham Bristol Canterbury Derby Guildford Southwark Chester	29 29 29 28 28 28 27 26 26 26 26 26 26 26 25
20%-24%	Newcastle Oxford Birmingham Chelmsford Durham Lincoln Worcester Guildford Southwark Truro Exeter Norwich	24 24 23 23 23 23 23 21 21 21 20 20	Guildford Southwark Newcastle York Birmingham Canterbury Coventry Rochester	24 24 23 23 22 21 20 20	York Sodor and Man Canterbury Lichfield Winchester	24 24 22 22 20	Sheffield York Sodor and Man Lichfield Winchester Carlisle Rochester	24 24 23 22 21 21 20
15%-20%	Carlisle Coventry Lichfield Rochester York Sodor and Man* Bristol Canterbury	19 19 19 19 19 18 17 17	Bristol Carlisle Exeter Lichfield Sodor and Man* Europe Blackburn Winchester	19 19 19 19 18 16 15 15	Exeter Rochester Carlisle	19 19 18	Exeter London Blackburn Chichester	19 16 15 15
14% and under	Blackburn London Bradford Chichester Wakefield Winchester Europe*	13 11 6 6	Chichester London	10 12	Blackburn London Chichester Channel islands Europe	14 14 12 12 9	Europe Channel Islands	14 14

\*Information derived from C of E statistics published annually

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- There is no correlation between the proportions of incumbent status clergy who are women and the proportion of Area Deans. WATCH would be interested to hear of any dioceses who give conscious consideration to gender balance when making appointments to this role.
- London is in the bottom grouping for both SSM clergy who are women and stipendiary incumbent status clergy who are women.
- Women are more than half of all SSM clergy in 26 dioceses. This leads to a significant question about the value a diocese places on women's ministry where women are a high proportion of SSM clergy but a low proportion of stipendiary clergy, eg:
  - Rochester: 20% stipendiary clergy are women; 78% SSM clergy are women
  - Channel Islands (not a diocese but data given separately): 14% stipendiary clergy are women and 67% SSM clergy
  - Winchester: 21% stipendiary clergy are women, 60% SSM clergy are women
- The different categories of SSM are not collected centrally. Does your diocese know (and publish) how many SSM clergy are in the different categories described above?

**TABLE 3: Ordained women in senior leadership roles in diocese [overleaf]**

By December 2019, 22 dioceses had at least one woman among their bishops. Only two dioceses had more than one woman among their bishops. Some 27% of suffragan bishops and 12.5% of diocesan bishops are women.

There are still 16 dioceses without women among their archdeacons, although at least three of these currently have a vacancy for an archdeacon. Five dioceses have no women at all among their "ex officio" senior clergy: bishops, archdeacons and cathedral dean.

WATCH knows several dioceses find ways of ensuring that women's voices are heard in senior staff meetings. Does your diocese have a means of ensuring that women's voices (not a single woman's) are heard when making decisions at a senior level?

### Other authorised ministries

**Church Army Officers** are trained as evangelists, often working in areas of social deprivation or on the margins where church and society meet. Women have been trained as CA evangelists along with men for nearly 100 years. Today some are ordained while others remain lay. In 2018, 31% of all CA evangelists were female.

Numbers of Active CA evangelists of stipendiary age at the end of 2018			
	Female	Male	% Female
Lay	52	95	35%
Ordained	22	72	23%

**Readers/LLMs.** The majority of Readers/LLMs are licensed after the age of 40. In this, they follow the pattern of ordained women. It is noticeable that between the ages of 40 and 70, the proportion of women LLMs is higher than that of men – a pattern similar to that of female SSMs.

The total number of LLMs/Readers in training at the end of 2018 (age not included in data)				
Age	Female	Male	Total	% Female
Under 40	40	40	80	50%
40-59	1050	720	1770	59%
60-69	1550	1290	2840	55%
70+	140	150	290	48%

Note that the proportions of men and women are very similar to the proportions of women and men SSM clergy.

Female	% Female	Male	% Male
440	64%	240	36%

TABLE 2

 lowest proportion shaded in red  
 highest in yellow

		1	2	3
	Diocese	% Age Stipendiary incumbent status who are women	% SSM clergy who are women	% Area Deans who are women
1	Diocese of Bath and Wells	28	54	24
2	Diocese of Birmingham	26	50	30
3	Diocese of Blackburn	15	47	13
5	Diocese of Bristol	26	57	43
6	Diocese of Canterbury	26	43	20
7	Diocese of Carlisle	21	57	20
8	Diocese of Chelmsford	28	53	10
9	Diocese of Chester	25	55	33
10	Diocese of Chichester	15	40	29
11	Diocese of Coventry	31	58	44
12	Diocese of Derby	26	48	80
13	Diocese of Durham	30	57	36
14	Diocese of Ely	41	43	40
15	Diocese of Exeter	19	46	36
16	Diocese of Gloucester	33	50	33
17	Diocese of Guildford	26	52	25
18	Diocese of Hereford	34	65	15
19	Diocese of Leicester	33	42	50
20	Diocese of Lichfield	22	55	23
21	Diocese of Lincoln	29	56	14
22	Diocese of Liverpool	35	52	38
23	Diocese of London	16	34	19
24	Diocese of Manchester	30	54	30
25	Diocese of Newcastle	28	56	36
26	Diocese of Norwich	32	54	10
27	Diocese of Oxford	27	46	24
28	Diocese of Peterborough	32	55	41
29	Diocese of Portsmouth	32	63	57
30	Diocese of Rochester	20	78	29
31	Diocese of St Albans	28	44	39
32	Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich	29	49	40
33	Diocese of Salisbury	35	58	28
34	Diocese of Sheffield	24	55	30
35	Diocese of Sodor and Man	23	33	n/a
36	Diocese of Southwark	26	46	36
37	Diocese of Southwell	31	43	14
38	Diocese of Truro	32	57	8
39	Diocese of Winchester	21	60	27
40	Diocese of Worcester	29	53	25
41	Diocese of York	24	54	24
42	Diocese of Leeds	30	47	50
43	Diocese in Europe	14	26	n/a
44	Channel Islands	14	67	n/a
	Total	26	50	

**TABLE 4: Age and gender of ordinands beginning training 2017 and 2018**

The Church of England wishes to increase the proportion of women among younger individuals who train for ordination.

2018 data show an increase in this group, but still only 41% of the ordinands under 40 were women. The younger the cohort of ordinands, the smaller the proportion of women it contains. From the age of 45, the number (and proportion) of women ordinands equals and then overtakes that of men.

One implication of this continuing imbalance is that the proportion of women and men in licensed ordained ministry will be very slow to reach a gender balance, if it does so at all.

2018 is the first year when numbers of men and women training with the intention of stipendiary ministry were nearly the same, as were the numbers of those training with the intention of being an incumbent. We hope to see a similar pattern in future years.

However, no table is published which links age, gender and expected future role. This is an important link to investigate, as both the data we currently have, and anecdotal evidence, show women are being selected for training later in life than men, and more are selected for SSM and assistant roles. It seems unlikely that fewer women are of the calibre to be incumbents, and so this continuing correlation should be investigated further. See tables in Statistics for Ministry for more information.

Ordinands starting 2018	Starting in 2017			Starting in 2018		
	Female	Male	% Female	Female	Male	% Female
<25	14	19	42%	10	25	29%
25-29	17	56	23%	38	53	42%
30-34	25	45	36%	28	40	41%
35-39	23	34	40%	28	31	47%
40-44	41	29	59%	35	21	62%
45-49	42	23	64%	62	35	64%
50-54	50	28	64%	51	25	67%
55-59	33	25	57%	38	21	64%
60-64	16	10	62%	21	11	65%
65-69	5	2	71%	8	3	73%
70+	0	0	n/a	0	0	n/a
<b>Total</b>	<b>266</b>	<b>271</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>319</b>	<b>265</b>	<b>55%</b>

### Theological colleges and TEIs

It was pointed out to WATCH last year that all the principals of training institutions in the C of E are male. This was still the case in Dec 2019.

It is difficult to make direct comparisons of the gender distribution of staff of TEIs as they are staffed in a variety of ways, particularly part-time regionally-based courses. Several colleges have a good gender balance of core teaching staff, but Trinity Bristol and Oak Hill have very low numbers of female core staff, while Mirfield and St Stephen's House have small core staff but both only have one woman as part of this staff group.

What role models of leadership are given for both men and women ordinands if only a small minority of teaching staff are women?

#### Acknowledgements and sources of data

Figures of ordained clergy and LLMs, and information on ages and gender of ordinands are taken from data published by the Church of England in September 2019 (referring to data from 2018)  
Church of England Research and Statistics, Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3AZ

Information on senior clergy updated from diocesan websites Dec 2019  
Area Deans taken from Crockfords  
Church Army data supplied by Church Army

TABLE 3

Senior roles in diocese 2018	Bishops (D)		Bishops (S)		Archdeacons		Cathedral Deans and Residential Canons	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Diocese of Bath and Wells	0	1	1	0	1	2	0	1
Diocese of Birmingham	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1
Diocese of Blackburn	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	1
Diocese of Bristol	1	0	0	1	0	2	0	1
Diocese of Canterbury	0	1	1	3*	1	2	0	1
Diocese of Carlisle	0	1	1	0	0	3	0	1
Diocese of Chelmsford	0	1	0	3	3	4	0	1
Diocese of Chester	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	1
Diocese of Chichester	0	1	0	1	1	3	0	1
Diocese of Coventry	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1
Diocese of Derby	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	1
Diocese of Durham	0	1	1	0	0	2	0	1
Diocese of Ely	0	1	1	0	0	2	0	1
Diocese of Exeter	0	1	1	1	0	4	0	1
Diocese of Gloucester	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	1
Diocese of Guildford	0	1	1	0	0	2	1	0
Diocese of Hereford	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1
Diocese of Leicester	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1
Diocese of Lichfield	0	1	1	2	1	3	0	1
Diocese of Lincoln	0	1	0	2	1	2	1	0
Diocese of Liverpool	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	0
Diocese of London	1	0	1	5*	2	1	0	1
Diocese of Manchester	0	1	0	2	2	1	0	1
Diocese of Newcastle	1	0	0	1	0	2	0	1
Diocese of Norwich	0	1	0	2	1	2	1	0
Diocese of Oxford	0	1	1	2	1	2	0	1
Diocese of Peterborough	0	1	0	2	0	2	0	1
Diocese of Portsmouth	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	1
Diocese of Rochester	0	1	0	1	1	2	0	1
Diocese of St Albans	0	1	0	2	1	2	0	1
Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich	0	1	0	1	3	1	0	1
Diocese of Salisbury	0	1	1	1	2	2	0	1
Diocese of Sheffield	0	1	1	0	0	2	0	1
Diocese of Sodor and Man	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
Diocese of Southwark	0	1	0	2	3	7	0	1
Diocese of Southwell	0	1	0	1	0	2	1	0
Diocese of Truro	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1
Diocese of Winchester	0	1	1	1	0	2	1	0
Diocese of Worcester	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1
Diocese of York	0	1	1	3*	1	1	0	1
Diocese of Leeds	0	1	1	4	1	1	0	3
Diocese of Europe	0	1	0	1	1	4	n/a	n/a
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>37</b>

\*Male suffragan numbers for Canterbury, London and York include bishops giving pastoral support to Resolution parishes.  
Red shading = no women in any senior roles



womenandthechurch.org  
info@womenandthechurch.org