

La Côte Anglican Church

Prayer Ministry after services

Guidance note

2026

1. What is prayer ministry?

Prayer ministry is a vital part of our church life. It is offered at the end of most church services, either in response to the sermon, or for particular prayer needs.

Prayer ministry is conveying God's love and help to an individual, at their request, through listening and prayer.

The emphasis is on God as the one who brings comfort, strength, restoration, healing, challenge, and not on us. We are simply there as channels of his grace, being alongside the person to pray for and with them to receive from God.

Prayer Ministry involves being open and sensitive to God, and listening carefully and non-judgmentally to the person, in order to pray for (or with) them. As a prayer ministry team member, your aim is to facilitate an encounter with God through prayer. You are there to gently support and encourage the person as they come to God in prayer with their needs, and then to leave space for God to minister to the person in whatever way he chooses.

The information shared by the person who comes for prayer should remain confidential, in line with the confidentiality and safeguarding guidelines detailed in section 7, below. Normally, you do not disclose the person's identity nor what they have said to anyone else.

2. Foundations: What is the scriptural and theological basis for prayer ministry?

There are several foundational scriptural and theological concepts undergirding prayer ministry. The New Testament consistently teaches that Christians should pray for one another, care for one another, and exercise spiritual gifts for mutual edification. We offer prayer ministry after services as a practical application of these principles, not as a biblically mandated element of corporate worship.

a. Christians are instructed to pray for one another

Galatians 6:2 speaks of "bearing one another's burdens," which many churches understand to include intercessory prayer. Ephesians 6:18 instructs believers to pray "at all times ... for all the saints." James 5:14–16 encourages the sick to call for the elders, who are to pray over them, concluding, "Pray for one another, so that you may be healed."

Prayer ministry after a service provides an intentional opportunity to obey these commands.

b. Jesus frequently ministered to individuals

The Gospels portray Jesus preaching publicly and then ministering personally. For example, he healed individuals who came to him after teaching, prayed for the sick, responded to personal needs and spoke prophetically into people's lives. Many churches see post-service prayer as an extension of this pattern: public proclamation followed by personal ministry.

c. The apostles combined preaching with prayer

In the Acts of the Apostles, preaching is often accompanied by prayer and ministry to individuals. The apostles are recorded as having prayed for many individuals and families, for healing, encouragement and strengthening.

d. The church as a caring community

Theologically, prayer ministry expresses several doctrines: the priesthood of all believers, the communion of saints, mutual care within the body of Christ and God's ongoing work through the church. Prayer ministry is one way in which we can fulfil Jesus' command to love our neighbours as ourselves.

3. Is healing part of prayer ministry?

Many people coming forward for prayer ministry are burdened with concerns about physical, mental and emotional health, their own or the health of loved ones, and by broken or breaking relationships. In principle, yes, prayer ministry may involve prayer for healing, in its widest sense. Yet such prayer needs to be done cautiously, with loving sensitivity.

The terms 'healing' and 'recovery' are close in meaning in everyday speech but are slightly different in emphasis. Both imply a return to a prior, idealised state of wellbeing, which much anecdotal and clinical evidence suggests is close to impossible, particularly for the most serious physical ailments, for severe mental illness and for trauma (by definition, the wound that does not heal). In medical contexts, healing refers to physical regeneration and repair of bodily cells and tissues. Recovery is broader, implying return to normal function or prior state. In medicine, wound healing is a first step towards recovery.

Bishop Morris Maddocks, a former Archbishop's advisor on healing, who also founded the Acorn Christian Healing Foundation, provided a helpful definition of Christian healing: 'Healing is Jesus Christ meeting you at the point of your need.'

Healing is broad, and God knows what we need most, even if we don't. Perhaps 'wholeness' is a better way of looking at it, rather than focusing exclusively on comprehensive physical cure.

Of course, God can do anything. But as prayer ministers, we usually do not know precisely what God *wishes* to do, nor what he *will* do in any given situation. The question is not so much whether healing is possible; it is. Rather it is whether, in a prayer ministry encounter, promoting a theology of desire and expectation for healing, in the sense of ‘fixing’ a problem, is ethical and ultimately helpful. There can be an understandable but unhelpful desire to remediate flaws, to fix things. Be cautious about raising expectations, through your prayer with people, that God will definitively and totally heal the person with whom you pray or their loved ones.

A more helpful notion may be that of ‘remaking’ or creating one’s life anew, from now on. Remaking does not imply a return to an ideal prior state, nor any particular outcome. It does imply a long-term process of spiritual exercise, including prayer, study and effort, within a loving Christian community. This concept of ‘remaking’ is not a recent innovation in Christianity. In the 11th or early 12th century, Anselm of Canterbury composed a song, which includes this verse:

*Lord Jesus, in your mercy heal us;
In your love and tenderness remake us.*

Considering the parallelism employed throughout the song, Anselm seems to have understood ‘heal’ and ‘remake’ as synonyms.

People can receive God’s healing in different ways when they are prayed for: physically, emotionally, spiritually, mentally, relationally. And even if their physical symptoms persist, they can still experience a deep sense of God’s peace and comfort in the midst of it.

4. When and where do we offer prayer ministry?

Our practice at La Côte Anglican Church is to offer one-on-one prayer ministry at the end of almost every service, whether at Crassier, Divonne or Gingins. The service leader usually mentions arrangements for prayer ministry during the notices. Typically, people pray in a quiet corner of the church building, away to one side, but always in view of others still present in the building after the service. This allows us to respect sound safeguarding principles, while praying one-on-one with people.

5. How do we offer prayer ministry? Recommendations to prayer ministers

a. Scheduling

You will be allocated the dates and services for your prayer ministry via the Church Suite rota. Please notify Church Administrator Liz Le Feuvre, through the Church Suite *unavailability* function, about those dates and times when you will not be available for prayer ministry.

b. Preparation

A helpful entry into this ministry is to first seek prayers after church yourself, with someone offering them, so that you have some sense of what it's like from that "side" of the conversation.

The best preparation for prayer ministry is to be praying yourself, before and during the service, for those with whom you might pray afterwards.

Please be aware of personal hygiene and particularly your breath when you are on duty. Best not to cause distraction by smelling anything other than fragrant!

As soon as the service has ended, make your way to the prayer ministry area. It is best to sit opposite the person with whom you will pray, or at a 90-degree angle to them. Ensure the area is ready and hospitable. If possible, have a packet of tissues available.

Be welcoming as people approach. Consider distance and personal space. Don't crowd people, but you have to be able to hear them and they you.

c. During the time of prayer

Introduce yourselves, if you do not yet know one another.

Invite the person to share briefly why they have come for prayer.

Listen to the person, deliberately and intently. Don't jump in with your own experiences or advice, let them tell their story in their own way. That means giving them time, not interrupting or making assumptions, but really tuning in to their words, feelings and silences.

Some people come with many or very complex needs. To help you to compose your prayer after they finish, as they speak, take a deliberate mental note of key points or words, For example, "Father ... cancer ... upcoming chemotherapy ..." However, if you forget something important, that is not a problem. You can ask the person later as you begin to pray.

Ask the person how they are feeling about the situation and acknowledge the legitimacy of those feelings during your prayer.

Ask the person what they would like God to do for them and mention that specific request as you pray.

Be open to God as they speak and invite the Holy Spirit to come.

Be very careful about touch! In general, it is best avoided but, if you feel the person is very desolate, exceptionally it might be appropriate. ALWAYS ASK FIRST. Don't assume. You could say something like this: 'Is it ok if I just put my hand on your shoulder / arm when we pray? Or would you prefer not? Either is fine.' It is very important the person feels they can say no without feeling awkward in any way. Above all, we need to give the person space and respect their wishes. Sometimes

the person with whom you are praying may ask to hold your hand. If you are comfortable with that, you may do so, but there is no obligation at all.

Pray, bringing their requests to God simply, clearly and audibly (the person may be hard of hearing). Pray simple and focused prayers.

If appropriate, sensitively share any encouraging Scripture, weaving it into your prayer.

If you regularly practise praying in tongues (glossolalia), please be sensitive to the needs of the person. A few La Côte church members have this experience but most do not. Of course, the church encourages the exercise of many spiritual gifts, but it may not be in the person's best interest at that moment to introduce a new practice with which they are unfamiliar.

Some like to close their eyes when doing prayer ministry. However, if you are comfortable doing so, you may choose to keep your eyes open to be aware of the person's reactions.

When the person is explaining their need for prayer, and occasionally during prayer or afterwards, there may be tears, or some other reaction, e.g., the person may seem to relax a bit or respond in some other way to your prayers. Sometimes there is no visible or audible reaction, and that is fine too. God works in many different ways.

Thank God for what he is doing – give him time to work. We are simply bringing the person and their requests before God and trusting him to hear and answer in his own way and time.

With some people, you might feel it helpful to invite them to pray after you. But don't impose that as a requirement. It may be most appropriate if the person has come with a subject of gratitude or thanksgiving to God.

As you finish, pray for God's protection and blessing on the person, and they should know they can come again for prayer. Assure them that you will be praying during the coming week. They should leave feeling accepted and loved, with dignity intact.

d. After the prayer time

If you meet the person in the coming days or weeks, don't assume they will want to talk about the issue again. If they want to talk about it, they will bring it up themselves.

6. Prayer ministry, not counselling

Prayer Ministry is different from counselling. Prayer ministers should not attempt to counsel or advise someone, even if they are trained and experienced counsellors, as that is not the expectation of the person, who is coming for prayer, not advice. Counselling is undertaken by trained, licensed professionals, working within a formal agreement with the client and under a strict code of conduct, over many weeks or

months. It is not appropriate in a one-off, post-service prayer encounter. Again, don't try to 'fix' the situation. That is not your role or responsibility. In prayer ministry good listening skills are essential. Our focus is on listening, rather than trying to advise or counsel.

Nevertheless, sometimes receiving Prayer Ministry can help a person to realise they may benefit from further help, such as seeking counselling, medical, psychiatric, spiritual or other specialist help. You should not raise this subject, but if the person with whom you are praying mentions the need or the possibility, suggest that they speak with the Chaplain about whom to approach for specialist help.

7. Confidentiality and safeguarding

It is vital that what is shared in prayer ministry situations remains confidential. Those coming for prayer need to trust that their issues won't be gossiped around the church, even under the guise of 'sharing for prayer', unless they have given express permission.

However, there are a few situations where it may not be desirable or even possible to maintain this confidentiality. These are:

- a. Information regarding abuse or coercion of a child or vulnerable adult, especially where there is a risk of ongoing or future abuse.
- b. Information suggesting that there is a risk of serious harm being done to or by someone. This may include suicidal ideation – expressions of an intention or desire to end one's life.
- c. Disclosure of serious criminal activity, which has not yet been dealt with by the police or the courts, particularly anything involving violence, whether by the person with whom you are praying or by someone else.

In situations where you are hearing information which you sense may need to be passed on, treat the person gently and with care, without being judgmental. Reassure them of God's loving presence, but also convey that you may not be able to keep this totally confidential, as you have grave concerns for their or others' safety. Tell the person that the matter is very serious and should be referred to the church Safeguarding Officers and the Chaplain, for advice. Ask if they would like you to do this, or if they would prefer to accompany you in approaching the Safeguarding Officers and the Chaplain. Things are not always clear cut, and in this way, they will see that you are not going to rush off to the authorities without a backward glance, but that you are taking due care to think the situation through, and check out the legalities with another responsible person. Reassure them that you will only share sufficient information with a Safeguarding Officer and Chaplain in order to make an informed decision about whether this needs to be taken further. We have to respect the law, and are aiming to ensure safety for them and any vulnerable adults or children.

The Chaplain, as spiritual leader of the church, always needs to be aware of any potential situation like this, and (s)he should then be involved in deciding how to

proceed. The Safeguarding Officer or Chaplain would normally rapidly contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor for confidential advice. If, after discussion and advice it seems clear that further steps should be taken to ensure safety, the Chaplain may discuss with you how this might happen. Ideally the person him or herself can be encouraged or persuaded to tell the relevant authorities (e.g., Social Services, Police, GP, etc.). You will not be expected to deal with this alone, and the Safeguarding Officer and Chaplain would always be involved in this kind of process.

Please read and be aware of the Church Safeguarding Policy, which describes the principles and procedures: <https://www.lacotechurch.ch/safeguarding/>.

To be a prayer minister, you must complete two safeguarding requirements:

1. Training

You need to complete the Church of England's online Basic Awareness and Foundations courses and send the certificates that you receive upon completion to the Church Safeguarding Officers (details at <https://www.lacotechurch.ch/safeguarding/>).

2. Police check

You need to obtain a certificate detailing your criminal record, or lack of one. In Switzerland, that is called an *extrait du casier judiciaire destiné aux particuliers*; in France, it is simply an *extrait de casier judiciaire*. The Safeguarding Officers can guide you to the appropriate website.

As of 2026, the costs of police checks are as follows:

- 17 CHF in Switzerland
- £ 21.50 in the UK
- Free in France

If you request, the Church will cover the cost of the police check. Once you have received the certificate, please send it to the Safeguarding Officers.

8. Links to pastoral care

Pastoral care refers to one-off or acute support in a crisis, as well as ongoing care, which is offered by lay and ordained members of religious communities. Pastoral care is the church's response to the challenges and suffering that people experience.

La Côte Anglican Church has a clear statement of policy, strategy and procedures concerning pastoral care (see <https://www.lacotechurch.ch/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/Pastoral-Care-at-La-Cote-Church-final-20260119-5.pdf> and more generally <https://www.lacotechurch.ch/church/pastoral-care/>). That statement acknowledges that prayer ministry is one valuable means by which pastoral care is provided to church members.

Pastoral care seeks to support people with spiritual, emotional and practical needs. If the person with whom you are praying mentions a serious need that is not in the category of a safeguarding risk (as outlined in section 7, above), you might ask whether you may mention the situation in confidence to the Chaplain, who can arrange some pastoral care, whether with a clergy person (spiritual needs), a trained, experienced Stephen Minister (emotional needs) or another volunteer for practical help (e.g., with transport, meals, hospital visits). For full details of these possibilities, please read sections 6-9 of the Pastoral Care Policy, Strategy and Procedures document mentioned above. If the person agrees, speak to the Chaplain as soon as possible. If the person demurs, do not push or insist.

9. Support for prayer ministers

It is important that you receive prayer on a regular basis as well as giving it to others. We all need prayer, and you don't have to be desperate or in great need to ask for it. In fact, it is really helpful if those on the prayer ministry team are seen to be asking for prayer. It may encourage others to feel they can come for prayer too.

If you have a very difficult prayer time with someone, approach one of the clergy members for support, while respecting as much as possible the confidentiality and safeguarding principles outlined in section 7, above.

10. New team members

The Church needs more members for the prayer ministry team. If you know of someone who has a heart for prayer for others, please pass his or her name on to the clergy, who may follow up.

11. Resources

Church of England. *Common Worship: Pastoral Services*. London: Church House Publishing, 2000.

- The principal Church of England resource for pastoral offices, including ministry to the sick, anointing, laying on of hands, reconciliation, and prayers for healing
- Essential for understanding the liturgical framework within which parish prayer ministry operates

Anglican Fellowship of Prayer (Canada). *Healing Prayer: A "How To" Guide for Prayer Ministry Teams*. Revised edition 2017.

- A concise practical handbook covering:
 - listening prayer
 - praying with individuals
 - confidentiality
 - team ministry
 - discernment
 - follow-up

Pritchard, John. *How to Pray: A Practical Handbook*. London: SPCK, 2011.

- Accessible guide to personal and corporate prayer
- Useful for training new prayer ministers

Maddocks, Morris. *The Christian Healing Ministry*. London: SPCK, 1981.

- One of the foundational Anglican texts on healing ministry
- Combines theology with practical parish guidance