

# Trainee Elder-Pastor - Job Opportunity

## Union Church Sheffield

Thank you for taking the time to consider this opportunity.

Whether you yourself are thinking of applying, or considering the role for someone else, we hope there's enough information below to start a conversation. As a first step, we invite you to email us at [apply@unionchurchsheffield.org](mailto:apply@unionchurchsheffield.org) so we can answer your initial questions, and arrange an initial phone call. We can then explain the 'next steps' for applying, if you decide you want to proceed. The deadline for final applications is **Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> April** but do get in touch as soon as possible.

We're praying for you - and all those who take an interest in this role - that the Lord would guide you to serve his people in a context where you personally will grow in your love of Christ. We hope for one of you, that might be with us here at Union Church.

warmly,

Handwritten signatures of Samuel and Chris in black ink.

Samuel McWhirter & Chris Richardson  
Pastor-Elders, *on behalf of the Union Church family*



# Trainee Elder-Pastor

*specific responsibility:* teaching & small-groups

## KEY DETAILS

*Core Hours:* 24 hours per week (allowing 2 days for study if needed)

*Pay-Scale:* £31,984 pro-rata (Grade A1)

*Start Date:* September 2026

*Term:* 3 year fixed-term contract

## CHURCH DESCRIPTION

Union was planted in 2018 to be a gospel witness among some of the world's most unreached communities in Sheffield, including international students, settled migrant communities, and refugees. Our vision is that people from the diverse and disadvantaged communities around us will find life and freedom in Christ - particularly those living in the wider Ponderosa Park area where we now meet. We are a local church seeking to grow as an intercultural community that reflects the diversity of our city.

As a church, we want to grow as a visible expression of God's wisdom to reconcile diverse people in Christ. We're looking to grow the Eldership for this next stage of life together.

According to government figures (2025) the Ponderosa Park area is in the top 5% most deprived areas in England. From the 2021 census data, in the 1km<sup>2</sup> area around the church building, 58% identify as White British; 16% of people identify as Arab; 11% as South Asian; 9% as African; and 7% as 'other ethnicities' likely others from the Middle-East (i.e. Kurds & Turks). We're delighted to be serving this area.

Our beliefs and doctrinal distinctives can be found at: [www.unionchurchsheffield.org](http://www.unionchurchsheffield.org). We are an 'elder-led congregational' church and for information about church governance we'd be glad to send our Church Handbook. But as it says on our website, *"It is not possible to comprehensively express the richness of the Bible's teaching or address every situation the church faces. Therefore, we hope [our statements] lead to further grace-filled conversations with those inside and outside the church about the gospel."*

## ROLE DESCRIPTION

This role is for a Trainee Elder-Pastor, with particular responsibility for *teaching and overseeing small groups*. Being a training role, we will actively seek to nurture your pastoral and teaching gifts. The role bears significant responsibility, but we will support you, in the context of the eldership, as your responsibilities increase over time. The part-time nature of this role is to enable you to access or continue theological study alongside working for the church. Alternatively it may allow for other work if you have already completed theological studies or have other relevant experience.

As an Elder-Pastor, you will increasingly be given responsibility for teaching in our Sunday gatherings and for supporting our small-group discipleship. This could eventually look like preaching around 40% of Sundays, alongside supporting the church's "one-another" discipleship - both within our small group structures and more broadly across the life of the church. The role also includes contributing to the day-to-day organisation and oversight of church activities, particularly in relation to Sunday gatherings.

We intentionally do not describe the role as an “assistant pastor” as we’re committed to working collegiately as an Eldership. If successful you will be welcomed in as ‘Candidate Elder’, reflecting the fact that you are a trainee, but in time we would appoint you as an Elder; assuming it has the church’s support.

While we would want you to have a wholehearted commitment to the church’s mission to reach non-Christians, the role itself does not require you to have a particular gifting in evangelism. We are looking for someone to help the church understand the gospel and how to live in light of it. We therefore welcome applications from those whose current local church can affirm their experience of bible teaching; those who may have led small group bible studies, or may even be a lay Elder.

The opportunity at Union Church is to develop your gifts in the context of a church serving a wonderfully culturally diverse neighbourhood. We’d be keen to receive your application if you have the life experience, skills and God-given passion to serve this kind of community.

Funding for the role will be secured once a suitable candidate has been identified. An offer of employment will depend on the funds coming in, but we’re actively talking with funders, and we ourselves plan to fund up to 50% of the role. If you’re looking to study alongside the role, we will also collaborate with you to secure a ‘study bursary’ to cover the costs of course fees and the days studying.

## ROLE SUMMARY

- Serving as part of a **small, collaborative leadership team**
- **Preaching and teaching** in a range of church settings, including Sunday gatherings
- **Strengthening discipleship** across the life of the church, with particular focus on small groups
- **Supporting the organisation and oversight** of church activities, especially Sunday gatherings
- **Developing pastoral ministry areas** in line with gifting, experience, and the needs of the church

## SUITABLE CANDIDATE

There is an occupational requirement that the post holder is a committed, practising evangelical Christian, in accordance with Part 1 of Schedule 9 of the Equality Act 2010. As the role is for an Elder-Pastor, the successful candidate must also meet the criteria given in our Church Handbook; whose doctrine and lifestyle are in accordance with our beliefs, doctrinal distinctives and ethical statements.

We are looking for someone who:

- meets the biblical standards for Elders
- evidences their love for Christ in their love for others; regardless of age or background
- has a clarity about the gospel; and an integrity in living in daily repentance and faith
- has wisdom to know what is of first importance and the limits of their own knowledge
- has a proven ability to teach the Bible; so people are equipped to understand it for themselves and called to a life of love and obedience
- can build rapport with a wide range of people, being approachable and wise in how they relate
- has experience of leading others in a local church, so people grow in love, character and skills
- can work independently, as part of a team
- is willing to live near to the Ponderosa Park area, or in a similar culturally diverse area of the city