



Archbishop's Pin honours two lives of faithful service

A Cathedral server who makes sure every great service runs without a hitch, and a lay leader who has held a northern suburbs parish together for decades, have been recognised for exceptional service to the Diocese.

Congratulations to Les Milner of St Peter's Cathedral and Jean Hunter of Holy Cross, Elizabeth, recipients of the 2026 Diocesan Exceptional Service Award, known colloquially as the Archbishop's Pin.



Les Milner and Jean Hunter after receiving their awards from Archbishop Brad Billings at the Synod Eucharist, St Peter's Cathedral

The Diocesan Exceptional Service Award is intended to recognise remarkable, and generally voluntary lay, service to the Synod. The award is determined by the Archbishop in consultation with the Archdeacons and Secretary of Synod, to whom nominations may be made.

This year's recipients were presented with their awards at the Synod Eucharist at St Peter's Cathedral on Friday evening, 16 October.

Les Milner at St Peter's Cathedral

Anyone who has attended an ordination, a Chrism Eucharist or the welcome of an Archbishop at St Peter's Cathedral has probably seen Les Milner's work, even without knowing it.

For many years Les has served at the Cathedral as a server, acolyte, crucifer and thurifer. He serves at the main Sunday services, at Evensong and at weekday celebrations of Holy Communion, where he also reads the lessons.

He has also been part of the big occasions in Diocesan life. These include ordinations, Synod services and the farewells and commissionings of Archbishops. Les attends the rehearsals and takes copious notes, so he can brief everyone with a liturgical role. His nominators say he 'always had an eye for detail and made sure that the liturgical 'choreography' for each act of worship went without a hitch'.

Les has rostered the Cathedral's altar party for many years. He has made sure there is always a full complement of servers, acolytes, banner bearers, MCs, crucifers and thurifers, and he has often stepped in himself at short notice. He has also trained most of the current team, from children to tertiary students to older members of the congregation.

His ministry reaches well beyond the sanctuary. Les has befriended many overseas students at the Cathedral and often helped them with their university and TAFE assignments, particularly with English words, spelling and idioms. He also runs the Cathedral Cinema Group, where more than 20 people meet monthly for a film, dinner and discussion. Les chooses the film each month 'and hopes against hope that it may meet with the approval of the group. Sometimes it does not!'

Les was a schoolteacher. Then for 26 years he served as a lay chaplain with the Inter-Church Trade and Industrial Mission (ITIM), including in the Department of Fisheries.

Les was nominated by Stuart Langshaw and Jenny Wilson. 'Les's long and varied ministry at the Cathedral, and also his ministry as an 'industrial chaplain' through ITIM, make him a most suitable and eminent candidate to be awarded this diocesan recognition,' they wrote.

Jean Hunter at Holy Cross, Elizabeth

Jean Hunter has been a stalwart of Holy Cross, Elizabeth, since the 1990s, and her ministry has repeatedly broken new ground.

She arrived in the parish during the time of the Reverend John Hewitson and soon started and led a parish youth group. She has served as Churchwarden through several long interregnums, as well as some years as Treasurer. She has been Warden continuously since 2014, and the parish's sole

Warden since 2018.

As a Licensed Lay Leader, Jean has led Sunday worship and funerals. She has also taken part in the parish's outreach, including the Sunday-night Food Barn program run from the Anglican Mission next door to the church, and nursing home ministry. When St Columba College opened at Andrews Farm, she supported the lay-led holiday programs and after-school care that grew up around it. She has also kept the parish running through Bunnings sausage sizzles, car boot sales and market days.

Her service has extended well beyond the parish. In the late 1990s she became a lay chaplain at Gawler High School through the Schools Ministry Team. There she supported students and staff through times of deep grief. She later worked with AnglicareSA, including supporting victims of domestic violence in the Barossa Valley.

In 2017 Jean became the first lay person licensed as a chaplain at the Lyell McEwin Hospital. She served there until 2024, at a time when lay pastoral chaplaincy in hospitals was not yet well established.

Since 2023 Jean has led Morning Prayer at Holy Cross twice a month. With training and support she has also begun preaching. She serves as a Eucharistic Assistant and continues to provide pastoral care to the congregation.

Jean was nominated by Stuart Langshaw, with the support of the Reverend Lyn McRostie, the Reverend Michael Lane, Bishop Tim Harris and Archdeacon Jo Smith.

“Jean is genuine Phoebe, a faithful enabler of people and parishes, and earlier, a faithful Anglican in Anglicare,” said Lyn McRostie. “She models lay leadership in a changing church. Her story is one of care, compassion and vision, as to how the church might be.”

Date Created

October 19, 2026