



Serving by mandate: ministry and apostolate

He came to serve: it is a basic need of Christians to follow the example of Jesus and enter into the service of God and their fellow human beings. Everything that people do for the witnessing fellowship of all those who have been properly baptised, is a service in the church of Christ.

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The levels of ministry ↑

Some of these services involve divine power and authority and thus require a spiritual ministry. The only ministry that Jesus Himself authorised is the apostolate. This has given rise to other ministries in the course of history. With respect to spiritual authority the New Apostolic Church acknowledges three ministries.

The **diaconal ministry** includes:

- preaching the gospel in divine service and conveying the word of God in pastoral care visits
- blessing the congregation in word services

The **priestly ministry** includes the additional authority:

- of proclaiming forgiveness of sins in the commission of the Apostle and in the name of Jesus Christ
- of performing Holy Baptism

- of consecrating and dispensing Holy Communion
- of performing acts of blessing

And the **Apostle ministry** includes the additional authority:

- of ordaining ministers
- of dispensing the gift of the Holy Spirit in Holy Sealing



Ministerial authority ↑

The authority does not issue from a human being but from Jesus Christ, the head of the church. It is conveyed to the minister through the Apostle ministry by way of ordination: with the authority, blessing, and sanctification for the respective spiritual task.

In addition to these ministerial levels, the New Apostolic Church has an organisational hierarchy:

- leadership functions at the Apostle level and the District Churches are assumed by the *District Apostle*
- church districts are led by a *district rector*
- congregations are led by a congregational rector

Such leadership functions are conferred by appointment. The minister is sanctified and blessed. Their deputies are called by assignment. In addition to this, there are *Bishops* as assistants to the Apostles.

This structure is the result of a reform which came into effect on Pentecost 2019. From the time before that there are still ministerial designations such as Evangelist, Shepherd, or District Elder. They have the same power and authority as the priestly ministry.

The Chief Apostle [↑]

A special function is taken by the **Chief Apostle**. He is the highest spiritual authority and leads the international Church. He discharges the Petrine office. He is also responsible for keeping the doctrine pure while developing it further (authority of the keys). For this special service the Chief Apostle is ordained.

His position corresponds to that held by Peter in the circle of the early Christian Apostles. Since Pentecost 2013, the French national Jean-Luc Schneider has occupied this ministry. He is the ninth Chief Apostle since the Church was established.

Read more in the [Catechism](#)

