Called by God

Deacons’ Ordinations, 1 July 2018

DIOCESE OF LICHFIELD

Come follow Christ in the footsteps of St Chad

discipleship  vocation  evangelism
All are called

God creates and calls everyone – including everyone in the Cathedral this morning. But we are here to celebrate the calling of eight women to the ministry of deacons in God’s Church – an ordained ministry through which they will serve God and other people by the way in which they live and the things they will do – in their communities, their churches, their neighbourhoods, their workplaces. This booklet tells you a bit about each of them, and what has brought them here. If you would like to talk to anyone about God’s calling to you, please contact angela.bruno@lichfield.anglican.org and Angela will put you in touch with someone who can help you explore this further.

Nicola Busby

Nicky Busby, who originally trained as a chef, has been married to Philip since 1993. They have three adult children, and work together on their family-run arable and strawberry farm. She became a Christian through going to an Alpha Course, realising she’d found the missing element in her life. She’s been actively involved in church-life for a number of years, and gradually came to realise that God’s call to her wasn’t going away. She has been on a number of training courses and Panels, and has been called to serve as an Ordained Local Minister (OLM) in her local group of five parishes, to ‘share the message of Christ with whoever is listening,’ as she puts it.
If you feel that God is calling you, or if people are mentioning ‘God’s call’ to you in conversation, then don’t hesitate, says Nicky. God calls different people in different ways. Be prepared for commitment – the demands on your time and energy will test you but the reward is having a deeper and greater understanding and acceptance of God, Christ and Holy Spirit.

Nicola Caines

Nicki grew up in the Welsh Marches, moving to the Midlands and marrying after her time at university. She worked as a teacher and lecturer before chronic illness put an end to her career. Her journey into ministry began ostensibly during that time – yet in another sense, she says, it’s been lifelong.

She feels that when we are called by God we often suffer from a disproportionate sense of inadequacy. We’re all faulty and we’ll make mistakes but hopefully we’ll learn and grow, trusting in God’s grace to see us through. Her advice to anyone seeking to explore their vocation is to take time over it and find a good Spiritual Director/Companion to help you reflect.

Melanie Clark

Mel believes that God is calling her to meet people, wherever they are, and walk alongside them with Christ. She’s passionate about accessible education as part of a life-long journey in Christian discipleship and she wants to encourage people to be curious about God and ask questions.
Before being called to ordained ministry she completed a PhD in early-modern history at Selwyn College, Cambridge. She’s married to Matthew, a history teacher, and they have two small children. One of the biggest misconceptions about preparing for ministry, she thinks, is the idea that it’s a lonely path you tread on your own. But Mel’s discovered that in sharing your experience with others they can join you for the ride and grow in their own faith alongside you. Her advice to anyone who might be exploring what God is calling them to do is to be true to themselves. You may sometimes feel different, or an outsider, but God is calling you specifically, with all your history, and in all your individual uniqueness, she says.

**Emma Cooksey**

Emma, with husband John, 10-year-old son Harry and Buster the dog, has moved from Wednesbury to Longdon to serve her curacy. She worked for 16 years as a quality manager for a company specialising in diagnosing different types of cancer. She loved her job and her colleagues – but the feeling grew that God had something other than that role for her – a feeling she couldn’t keep on ignoring.

Emma feels a strong sense of serving God within the community and being rooted within that community. Becoming a curate isn’t just filling out an application form, she says! It’s taken her about 10 years from first having the courage to speak to someone about her sense of calling to the point of ordination – working through a rigorous discernment and training process,
and with plenty of hard work along the way. But it’s so important not to rush, she says. Anyone exploring what God is calling them to do needs to take time, talk to others – and to people who are on a similar journey.

Emma vividly remembers feeling that God wouldn’t want her as she didn’t feel like she fitted the mould as to what a vicar should be like. But now she realises that there is no such thing as a stereotypical vicar and that God calls all sorts of people into all sorts of roles.

**Catherine Leighton**

Cath and Paul were married on Christmas Eve 2009 in Chell, Stoke-on-Trent, and have brought up two boys who have now flown the nest. She previously worked as a music teacher, having taught singing and piano at both secondary and primary levels. She left teaching to undertake ordination training at Trinity College, Bristol.

Cath’s current hobbies are singing and playing the piano, being ‘prop’ in rugby as part of the Trinity Wolves (college team) - she intends to continue playing as a member of Wolverhampton Ladies as it’s great for wellbeing - running for pleasure, nature, especially animals, birds, flowers and just ‘being,’ surrounded by God’s presence in creation.
Cath and Paul are very much looking forward to getting to know the parish of Tettenhall Regis. She feels strongly drawn to those who are living with dementia, and to offering support to the dying, and hopes to explore these areas in her new post.

And if you think you might be called by God in some way? Pray for guidance, says Cath. Ask or volunteer to have-a-go at different aspects of ministry as part of the exploration process. More than anything – be patient! God’s timing is perfect. If the call is of God, everything will fall into place, allowing for all involved to cope with the transition and challenges that are faced, enabling you to get to each destination.

Anne Martin
Anne has lived and worshipped all her life in the parish of Oxley, Church of the Epiphany in Wolverhampton, along with husband John, their lad Marcus and Achilles, their tortoise. She believes she’s been called out by her local congregation to serve their local community in various ways, especially with schools and youth work.

Anne’s main career has been as a primary-school teacher and her passions include Guiding – she’s been a leader in the Brownies for 40 years. Another passion is football: Wolves fans will all share her joy and delight as they’re promoted to the Premier League this season.
Ordination came as a complete surprise. When she was critically ill in hospital she heard the words, ‘You still have work to do’. It took a long while before the penny dropped; she didn’t want to mention the ‘o’ word out loud, she says. It felt too scary . . . and anyway, ordination is for other people, isn’t it?

God takes you out of your comfort zone and challenges you, Anne’s discovered. Training for ministry has been both a challenge and a joy, working and learning alongside fellow Christians from a breadth of traditions, and she looks forward to continuing this journey with them. If anyone is feeling called for ordination she recommends exploring further, pray and talk it through with people you trust, and believe that it really, really can be you God is calling.

Alison Storer

Alison grew up in Manchester before heading off to London to study medicine. It was as a junior hospital doctor that she met her husband Jim, and they’ve been married for almost 25 years. They have three grown-up sons. Alison will continue to work as a GP while being a self-supporting curate, and knows that this will bring both joys and tensions. This juggling of her two vocations has been one of the difficult parts of training.
Alison has been a Reader for six years but there has been this underlying niggle that God wanted more of her. What that ‘more’ is at this stage is difficult to define, but there will be a continuation of her current preaching and teaching ministry, and she is going to start taking funerals. She is open to being used as and where she is needed, she says.

**Abigail Walsh**

Abbie is originally from Kent, although she’s lived in Manchester for the last 11 years. She lives with her rescue dog, Harper. Before being ordained she worked as a GP. In both her medical work and her future ordained ministry Abbie feels that God is calling her to be where Jesus is, alongside those who are left out of society - the sick, poor, oppressed, lost and lonely.

Her former vicar once said to her that as an ordained person she would need to do just three things - eat, sleep, and be occupied with the work that God is occupied with. During training, she’s learned that the Church is full of brilliant people who are absolutely occupied with the things that God is occupied with. It’s been a privilege to meet so many people during her training who are doing amazing things and she hopes to meet many more.

Don’t wait till you feel ready to respond to God’s call, she says. Telling God’s story is a huge task, she says, and we’ll never really be ready for it. But God can work through us even though we’re not perfect.