

## Peter's 'SSM Story'...

<b>Parish:</b>	St Catherine's Heald Green	<b>Non-Parochial Commitment(s):</b>	None: Retired
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### ***Were you called to be a priest / minister or an SSM – is there a difference?***

I am an SSM who has been called by God to serve the people of God within the context of a local congregation which meets regularly to worship God. As a priest / minister / leader, I seek - along with members of the congregation - to serve one another's needs. As servants we can learn from each other.

As an SSM I can serve freely without cost to any.

### ***As an SSM, what are you called to 'be' and 'do'?***

I do not believe that there is a way of being a priest but there is formation of a priestly character, so that the call to the priesthood / SSM is both about being and doing. The doing comes out from the character of being a servant of Christ.

After a year at one church I have been transferred to another to complete my curacy. At the first church I was principally dedicated to the pastoral needs of senior members of the congregation – running a group which met weekly as well as co-ordinating visits for the housebound (home communion). At the church at which I am now based the range of activities will be greater with the need to serve the elderly undiminished as a goal.

### ***What would you say are the 'joys' of being an SSM?***

The joy – which I am now beginning to experience in my second parish – derives from my new training incumbent who has welcomed me with open arms and acknowledges the skills and gifts which God has given me. The congregation has been very welcoming.

### ***What would you say are the 'challenges', if indeed there are any?***

The first church had appointed me and another younger curate to become part of the clergy team which already included the Rector and an experienced Associate Minister. Prior to our start the Rector had made clear that priority would be given to the younger curate for up-front opportunities so that leading services and preaching would be limited to once every 3 / 4 months for me at our main services. This was probably because the other curate was stipendiary. However the lack of opportunity to serve up-front was a disappointing aspect to my curacy. Additionally I was in the process of recovering from a prostatectomy.

***How do you balance your time, between ministry and other commitments?***

I intend to offer 15 hours per week to my new parish – 3 to training offered by the Diocese of Chester and 12 to the parish – although I recognise that from time to time I may exceed this. These hours are over and above time spent at church on Sunday. This then enables me to find time to care for my wife – whose mother is blind and has advanced dementia, and whose brother has terminal cancer. It also gives me time to play squash and learn to play golf (presently hopeless!).

***Do you believe that you are fulfilling your vocational calling? How?***

I believe that all members of any particular congregation can and do serve together building up the church and participating in mission. As first a Lay Reader, and now a member of the clergy, I feel that I am able to express this same vocational calling in a more focused and dedicated manner, by preaching and ministering in a more formal capacity.