



# February 2021 Lay Ministry Matters

## **GREETINGS TO YOU ALL FOR 2021**

Having missed the chance to send this out in January – most of you should be receiving it soon after Candlemas, the day we remember when the infant Jesus was presented at the Temple and recognized by Simeon and Anna, as ‘a light to lighten the Gentiles’ and ‘the glory of God’s people Israel’. Some churches have a tradition of leaving the Christmas Tree or the stable scene out until now. This year many churches have had crib scenes locked up after Christmas as so many of our buildings closed in January.

In Church Calendars, Candlemas signals a period of ordinary time, but this February feels far from ordinary, and as we look ahead to Lent, beginning in a couple of weeks, we are close to the time when the first lockdown occurred last year, and while we long for a “return” to how things were, for the families of more than 100,000 people, that will not happen. I am very conscious that among the Lay Ministers reading this there are those who have been bereaved, and there are Lay Ministers who were with us last year but are no longer alive.

We are a people called to share the hope of Christ in the world, but we look to a future which has less certainty than most of us have ever experienced. There will be great opportunities for the church to reach out to a world of hurting and bewildered people in the months to come, and the shape of our ministries this time next year could look quite different to how they looked this time last year.

## **BE GLORIFIED**

Can you be part of the film the Diocesan Comms team are putting together for this year's online Maundy Thursday service, made-up of a montage of different clips sent in by people from across the parishes?

Jenny Ross writes:

“We want to bring us all together as a diocesan family this Lent and Easter, with a montage film that will celebrate the ways we each demonstrate the extraordinary love of God in our ordinary, everyday lives.

Maybe you are a parent or carer. You might work in a supermarket or be a bus driver. Maybe you understand that you live out your calling as an accountant.

Perhaps you use your technical or musical gifts to support the worship in your church. Or maybe your film clip will be inspired by our theme track, Graham Kendrick's, 'Be Glorified'.

As Lay Ministers, this time last year few of us were comfortable with looking into our phones and filming! Now many of us are well practiced – and this is what we need to do:

Use your phone to film a short clip which demonstrates or explains your job or any activity you do which you see as your calling or witness. Maybe you could hold up a sign, or film yourself 'doing' something linked to your job? Maybe you could hold up some of the lyrics of the song...be as creative as you like.

- Think visual - they probably won't be able to use the sound you send us
- It doesn't have to be long - 10 to 20 seconds.
- Please ensure you have the permission of anyone else you capture in your film. This is particularly the case of any children and young people - you must have the permission of their parent or guardian.
- Email: [communications@rochester.anglican.org](mailto:communications@rochester.anglican.org) to tell them about your clip and so they can arrange to receive it.
- Please send in any clips by **Monday 15 March, 2021**

If this still isn't something you can imagine yourself doing – who from your parish might you encourage to take part?



## **NEW MINISTRY**

On January 21<sup>st</sup> on various screens in the area – Archdeacon Andy recommissioned Rose Waghorn as an Evangelist at Istead Rise. Rose was previously commissioned to St Nicholas, Southfleet but for much of 2019 Rose was in hospital, or immobile at home after spinal surgery and a very long time of recovery on high dose painkiller, with much time for thinking and praying and wondering what the future might hold.



Although the congregation at St Nicholas continued to support Rose, as she began to be able to make very short slow journeys from home, she began to attend Istead Rise near her home. As the rest of us experienced a similar long period of not being with others in church and praying about what the Lord had in the future, Rose continued to meet virtually with folk at Istead Rise, and in the Autumn began to sense perhaps this was where God wanted her to stay. Andrew Vaughan, the vicar of Istead Rise, is leaving the parish very soon, so the future is full of unknowns, but Rose, along with the rest of the ministry team there, will wait on God to see where he leads them in holding out the hope of Jesus to their community.

## **VOCATIONS ROADSHOW.**

26 March is the second of two events created to help church leaders encourage vocations in their parishes and deaneries. All forms of vocation, both lay and ordained, will be looked at and we will try to answer any questions which you might have.

**All authorised lay ministers and clergy are welcome.**

As Lay Ministers we should challenge ourselves to see all people as God sees them – individual, exceptional, and full of potential. To release the gifts of all God's people, it is vital to talk about vocation with people from groups which have historically been excluded, people who may be different to yourself.



Every Christian has a vocation. No matter who you are, no matter where you are coming from, each one of us is made in the image of God. Made on purpose and for a purpose. All are called. Book by emailing [vocations@rochester.anglican.org](mailto:vocations@rochester.anglican.org)

## BOOKS, ONLINE EVENTS, EVEN A RADIO PLAY

If reading is your passion, or a book group is something you might be able to encourage

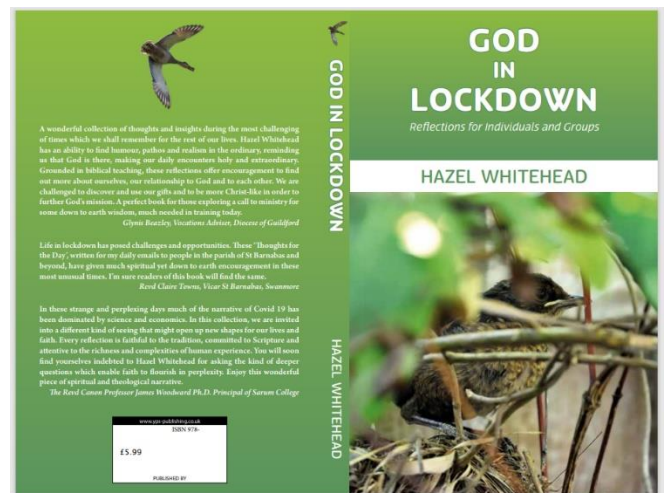
# The 2<sup>nd</sup> National Big Church Read

others to join, the 2<sup>nd</sup> National Big Church Read might be worth looking up.

This hopes to bring Christians from across the country to read Jeff Lucas's book, *"Singing in Babylon: Finding Purpose in Life's Second Choices"*. Starting on 17th February for 6 weeks there will be access to an exclusive video, reading plan and discussion questions for you to use as an individual, a small group or a whole Church.

Another book with a lockdown theme is *"God in Lockdown"* - recommended for individuals and small groups, which emerged from Thoughts for the Day written during Lockdown 1. Every reflection is followed by three questions which are starters for ten for further conversation. They can be used in on-line meetings as well as the more traditional face to face groups (assuming they are legal.) With titles such as *Tiny, happy people, Following the Crowd, Priscilla and Aquila, Ampliatus and who? Hanging out the Washing and Marcus Rashford for PM* there is something for everyone, and the author hopes it will be a good resource for ministry and discipleship.

Available to order for 5.99 from <https://www.ypdbooks.com/non-fiction/2197-god-in-lockdown-reflections-for-individuals-and-group-YPD02468.html>

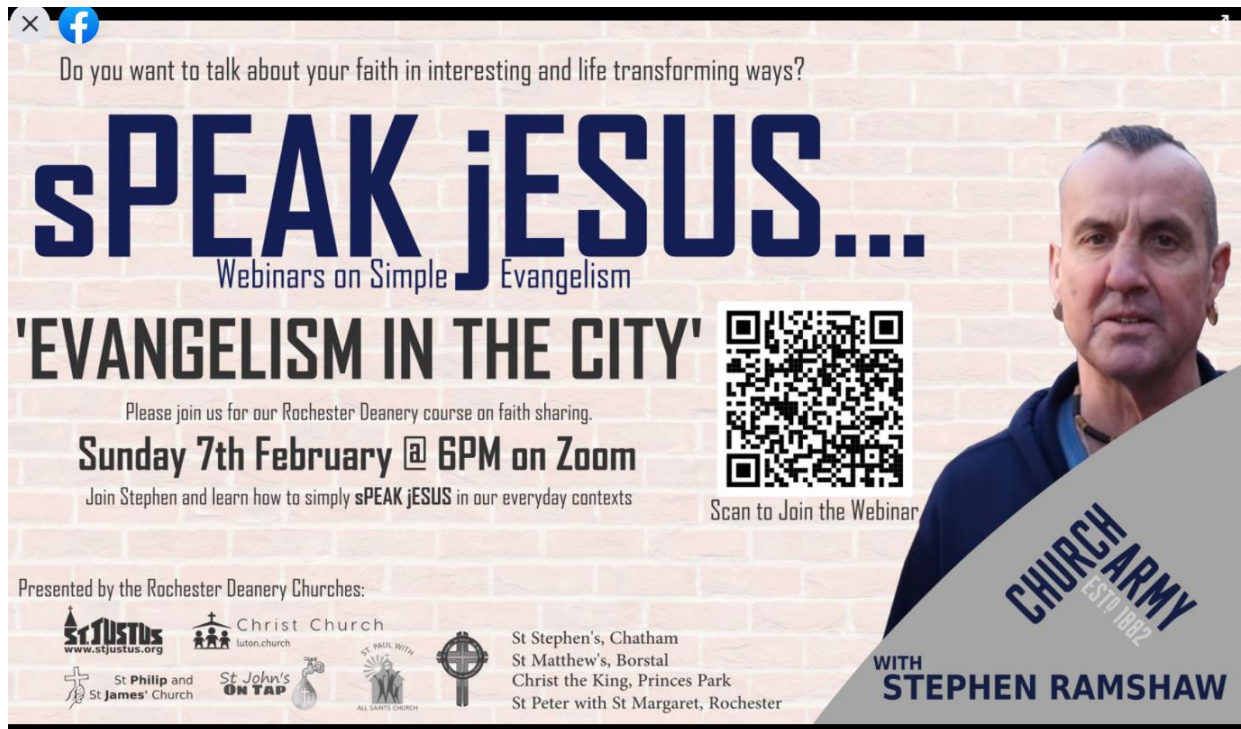


Tony Fitzpatrick, LLM from Tunbridge Wells was at the recent launch of *"Coming Home – Christian perspectives on housing"* by Graham Tomlin, Malcolm Brown, which he highly recommends – if you want to know more before committing to buying the book the event is still available to watch on:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MjW7XB5wAGg>



There are still plenty of training opportunities while we are staying at home. Rochester Deanery have an evangelism training event on Sunday night, and anyone is welcome whether they are in the deanery or not! To book, email: [curate@stjustus.org](mailto:curate@stjustus.org)



Do you want to talk about your faith in interesting and life transforming ways?

# sPEAK jESUS...

Webinars on Simple Evangelism

## 'EVANGELISM IN THE CITY'

Please join us for our Rochester Deanery course on faith sharing.  
**Sunday 7th February @ 6PM on Zoom**

Join Stephen and learn how to simply sPEAK jESUS in our everyday contexts

Scan to Join the Webinar

Presented by the Rochester Deanery Churches:

- St Justus [www.stjustus.org](http://www.stjustus.org)
- Christ Church [luton.church](http://luton.church)
- St Philip and St James' Church
- St John's ON TAP
- St Paul with ALL SAINTS CHURCH
- St Stephen's, Chatham
- St Matthew's, Borstal
- Christ the King, Princes Park
- St Peter with St Margaret, Rochester

CHURCH ARMY ESTD 1882

WITH **STEPHEN RAMSHAW**

On Monday of this week some of us were at “Growing Good” with Bishop Simon and Hannah Rich from Theos. Hannah was speaking about her research over the last three years, having travelled the country and interviewed over 350 people in 66 parish communities of all sizes, aiming to explore the question: **How can it be that an organisation whose membership continues to fall is, at the same time, increasing its service of the community?** In toddler groups and lunch clubs, food banks and night shelters, she heard countless stories of growth, both individual and collective, in faith and in number.

The finished report - *Growing Good*, in partnership with Church Urban Fund, outlines these stories and draws out key characteristics consistent with congregations that are growing spiritually and numerically through their engagement in social action and is available at <https://www.theosthinktank.co.uk/research/2000/01/31/the-grace-project> to buy for £5 or to download for free.

If you want to watch the recording of Monday’s webinar it can be found on <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7ERwhURoRAU>

**This report shows that social action leads to church growth when it enables congregations to develop meaningful relationships with those they would not otherwise have done, or who might not otherwise have come into sustained contact with the church.**

## DATES FOR 2020

At the start of the year the Formation and Ministry team diary would normally be full of courses and events; this year everything feels very provisional until much nearer the time. We have sadly had to cancel the March weekend residential retreat which has preceded the licensing of LLMs and has been an opportunity for them to reflect on where God has led them through training, and what the next stage might be, and as part of that the LLMs have each had 1:1 interview with Bishop James. This year everything will be online, so please pray for everyone involved, that this will work as well as possible.



IF such things are possible by then, the Cathedral is booked for licensing on May 15<sup>th</sup> and the following week (May 22<sup>nd</sup>) we hope to have a celebration of Lay Ministry for all the Lay Ministers in Rochester Archdeaconry. (More about that will come separately to those people)

Looking beyond the Summer we have booked a Lay Ministry conference day with Bishop Simon on October 2<sup>nd</sup>. I very much hope we can meet in person, but if that isn't possible there will be an online alternative, so you might want to add the date to your diary now.

## BEREAVEMENT RESOURCES



The number of people in our churches and communities who are grieving alone at present points to a massive need for care and kindness, and space for them to be listened to, when we can finally meet in person. The CofE nationally have paired up with bereavement charities including [www.ataloss.org](http://www.ataloss.org) whose website includes support services and information, and a very accessible short video featuring Kate Bottley <https://youtu.be/iQo8lnmtcvQ> on how any of us can reach out with kindness to bereaved people when we can't simply turn up and be there for them.

**Keep a look out for news of bereavement support training currently being put together by Caroline Clarke – this will be ideal for those of us in Lay Ministry as well as other volunteers.**

Not all bereavements are Covid related, but the restrictions have made bereavement so much harder. Some of you will have heard the sad news that Gill Betts, LLM at Pembury died last month after being diagnosed with cancer just a couple of months before. Gill (pictured here on pilgrimage with one of the inspiring women from the Hebron Womens' Co-operative) was licensed in 2019 and was the first LLM to have a second licence to the chaplaincy team at HMP Rochester. Please pray for her husband and adult sons, and for the congregation at Pembury as they grieve at a distance.



## **SAFEGUARDING.**

It was only in November that I last sent a letter with a safeguarding update – and there have been yet more changes. Tricia has tried to be in touch with everyone who did C3 in 2018 or earlier and are due for the Leadership Module. The National Safeguarding Team are making frequent changes, and the current policies on this module are on this Diocesan webpage: <https://www.rochester.anglican.org/safeguarding/leadership-2020-21/>

There are other changes proposed since the last mailing. The National Safeguarding Team are now working on an alternative to the Leadership module for people who minister with the Bishop's Permission. We are not expecting this to be an across the board "everyone over 70 can do this" course. If you are still in a leadership role in your church you will still be required to do the Leadership module, but if your ministry is one of more background support, pastoral visiting, occasional service leading or preaching, you might be eligible to do the new alternative when it is ready – hopefully this Summer. If this applies to be you, and your C3 training is already more than 3 years ago please will you do Basic Awareness and Foundation C1 online while we wait for the new course to be published.

I am also aware that some of you who do need to do the Leadership module are quite anxious about doing it – you have heard that it is on Zoom, and that there is written work to be sent in for someone to read.

**Please don't worry about this!** Some of you will know Trevor Long, (pictured here) Reader with PTO and Evangelist in St Matthew's High Brooms. Trevor has been doing safeguarding training as a Lay Minister for many years, and he was telling me about his experience of the new module – and even filmed a message for anyone who is concerned about the module! I'm not sure if we can send it with a mass mailing – I will try and post in on the Diocesan Facebook page instead - but Trevor's summary was:



*Last year during lockdown I found the first two sessions online via the Rochester diocese portal quite enjoyable - completed while drinking coffee and enjoying having my feet up.*

*However when applying to join the leaders course written work was required along with zoom sessions, watching two videos and supplying feedback, deep intake of breath !!!*

*I survived, not only that but enjoyed the experience, thanks to Greg and all the other people I met on zoom.*

*After umpteen years of ministry and safeguarding training, this module really had an impact.*

Greg said he has had other positive feedback – here is just one example:

*Having 'homework' to do outside the sessions was a good idea – it made the course feel more important. I also liked the incorporation of reflection on Scripture. It would have been interesting to reflect also on ecclesiology and how different models of church (whether it's a formal institution, a community of individuals, a close family, a sacrament of God's presence etc) have (and have had) an impact on Safeguarding.*

## **AND FINALLY**

Whether you are a Reader of many decades

Or an LLM Licensed by Zoom last May

Whether you are a Pastoral Assistant who has developed a telephone ministry

Or an Evangelist who struggles with Social Media

Whether your church is open or closed

Whether you have had both vaccinations and feel “raring to go” but still have to stay home,

Or you are going to work because your work is essential

Whether you are longing to get out and go places

Or whether you are so very tired despite not seeming to be doing much.

Whether you feel like you are doing more than usual and all of it under pressure

Or you feel like your opportunity for ministry has completely stopped.

Whatever your circumstances at present, you are called and loved by the one who knows you through and through. Be kind to yourself.

With my prayers and best wishes for you all,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kase". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal tail.