

October 2024 Lay Ministry Mailing

New Beginnings

Creation-tide and the season of harvest is a strange time to be writing about all things new but since saying goodbye to Karen in the summer much has been happening in the lay ministry network. This newsletter gives a taster of some of the stories I have been privileged to hear. They all have the theme of new beginnings. I am delighted that we have a new Warden of Lay Ministry and I hope very much you will be able to meet Mandy at the **Lay Ministry Conference on 9th November**. Mandy writes below. The newsletter also includes pieces from those travelling the journey of formation towards lay ministry as well as some information about lay ministers ministering.

I'd like to take this opportunity to express deep gratitude to Tricia for all the extra work she has undertaken in this interim period to ensure you all remain supported in the ministry you offer.

Enough from me – over to the voices of lay ministers.



Rev'd Canon Jane Winter Acting Director of Mission and Ministry Development Team

Our new Warden of Lay Ministry: Mandy Holloway

Dear Lay Ministers,

It is my privilege to accept the position of Warden of Lay Ministry, to serve alongside you in the work that God has called us to do, in the places where He has called us to do it.

I have served in my local parish of St Mary Greenhithe for over 30 years and have seen many changes: incumbents come and go, changes in policies and procedures, changes in the physical and spiritual landscape of the parish and the Diocese. Changes I am sure many of you will have seen too.

One of those changes was the formalisation of Licensed Lay Ministry to train and equip lay people to take on positions of leadership and ministry within their parishes, deaneries and local communities, thereby bringing Christian perspective and values wherever they serve.



My hope is to see more Licensed Lay Ministers serving in every parish in the Diocese, not only in the Church but in the wider community too, showing that the Church is relevant, interested and immersed in the life of its parish and community. I know that all of you are doing all that you can in your parishes, workplaces and areas of influence, but I also know that there is always more that we can be involved in – more Kingdom work to be done.

I am looking forward to getting acquainted with as many of you as I can, to see what passions and visions God has placed on your heart and how we can all work together to seek out where God is at work and join in with him to grow his Kingdom in Rochester Diocese.

I will hopefully see many of you at the Lay Ministry Conference on 9th November. Please do come and say hello.

For now, please keep up the good work. Keep close to God in your prayers and daily life and trust him to strengthen you and guide you in all he has planned for you.

With every blessing

Mandy Holloway
Warden of Lay Ministry
amanda.holloway@rochester.anglican.org

In Conversation Iain Kitchener and Neal Clifton

Here we meet Neal Clifton (NC) who is a licensed Lay Minister in Gillingham and a Learning Adviser for those on the Bishop's Certificate/Lay Ministry formation programme in conversation with Iain Kitchener (IK) who has just begun the Bishop's certificate.

IK What made you chose to go for lay ministry training?

NC I always, for many years, was attracted to Reader ministry. I was teaching full time and thought I'd wait to have more time, but when I moved to supply teaching I took the leap. That was my moment when God gave me the space. It happened at the time when we were changing to the more innovative Rochester Lay Formation programme.

NC What about you?

IK For me I felt a nudging and nagging that I should be doing something. I talked with a friend, she is a LLM and she helped me tease out what I could be doing and what God might be teasing out for me.

NC Why now?

IK Several reasons, the nagging became more insistent. We have 4 lay ministers, 3 over 70. I'm part of the team we meet weekly to pray and talk. We talked about the future and I thought I could explore lay ministry, maybe I do have some skills I could offer. I'm just at a point in life when I'm starting to think what next.

NC Yes there is something about it being the right time, the niggling which you try to ignore but it doesn't go away.

IK When I spoke to a former incumbent she said 'why didn't I see that, it is so obvious.' I've always backed away from ministry I didn't think it was my thing, I don't think ordained ministry is my thing but that doesn't mean there aren't other forms of ministry to explore.

NC People do ask you why not ordination. LLM is a distinct ministry and I have to keep telling people. Eventually in the process you have to make a decision to put yourself forward, push open the door and keep praying. And remember that we are not here by “accident”-God has called us all by name.

IK How has becoming a lay minister changed you as a person?

NC I think that is for other people to say, but what I do know in this process I learned to love Jesus even more by studying the gospels, engaging with them far more. 2000 years on he is still the greatest leader the world has ever known. No one has ever come close to the influence he has.

IK Has the process of formation fuelled your passion?

NC Yes it has become more focused. I've always been in church. I've never felt faith being dented, faith has kept me going through difficult situations. God has never let me down, even if I feel I have let Him down many times. He may not have responded the way I expected but he's never let me down.

IK What kind of roles has it led to?

NC Well LLM means we can do lots of ministry but for me I do a lot of preaching, leading small groups, taking funerals sometimes, being a learning adviser. Lots of LLM do many other kinds of ministry.

NC People need encouragement, who encouraged you?

IK My friend because she did the course. She joined our church about 2 years ago and she has a gift for discernment. She started asking questions in a provoking way and that was really helpful because it pushed me to think. I explored it with my parents and previous incumbent. I think it helped talking with our LLMs. I still don't know where that is heading and I am very opened minded about that. I had encouragement from others to think about different kinds of lay ministry.

NC What are you looking forward to?

IK Crikey! I'm looking forward to exploring and deepening my faith with other people I can learn from in the group and those teaching. I can develop and learn. I guess if you truly enter into something that is formational you have to be open and honest about yourself if you are going to change, so there is always the anxiety about how people are going to respond to you. I'm not worried about assignments but I don't have great theological biblical grounding and I will develop that through the course.

IK I have a thought that lay ministry is what I am being called to but I am open minded to explore it over the coming years.

NC I ended up a lay minister after long time of prayer and discernment, the process of reflection was helpful. I'm open too to what next – Street Pastoring appeals but we will see.

IK What do you find most rewarding about the lay ministry roles you do?

NC When I take a funeral that can be very rewarding: when you see people move on just a tiny bit. Preaching especially when it resonates for people. I always get varied responses. Taking reserved sacrament to a nursing home on a Monday morning in Gillingham, I was so taken aback about how that affected me, it is such a privilege. That's really where ministry is at.

IK Sounds like it is the unexpected that is most rewarding.

NC Yes that's true.

IK Were you affected by being in that role of sharing communion?

NC Yes because it was so important to the people in the nursing home, it has a special quality.

IK What advice would you offer to anyone who feels that God might be calling them in some way?
NC It is so important to listen and to speak to other people, so that others can encourage. Now when I feel I can discern a calling of some kind in others I make sure I share it with them rather than keeping it to myself and encourage them to explore their calling.

Good advice there from Neil, if you think someone has a call to lay ministry please do encourage them to explore it, don't leave it to someone else. Please pray for those on a journey discovering the vocation God is calling them into.



*Some of the current first year Bishop's Certificate cohort.
Iain is in the back row, third from the right.*

A journey towards Lay Ministry by Tim Harrold – St Paul’s Rusthall

One of the benefits I get as part of my training is a free subscription to the Church Times, a weekly newspaper. If you are not familiar with the paper, it is reassuring proof that good journalism is still possible. When faith in our media has dropped to an all-time low, the Church Times does a wonderful job in reporting the news in an impartial and balanced way.

A recent book review in the Church Times (Issue No. 8417 12th July 2024) set me thinking.¹ The book review explored the idea that “we become what we behold”, in much the same way as the more often quoted idea of “You are what you eat”. We have a human tendency to copy what captures our imagination, a behaviour reinforced by the Latin root of the word “imagination” which is related to imitation. Our word character also reinforces the connection between identity and image-making, being derived from the Greek word “kharakter”, a stamping tool used to impress an image on a coin.

Early Christians understood this also applies to spiritual formation. To become Christian is not just of belief, but of identity. Developing a distinctively Christian character requires “stamping” the wax of the soul with Christian forms. It was this idea of “stamping the wax of the soul” that I found myself reflecting over.

My journey over the last two years has been a process of spiritual formation, the stamping of my Christian soul. It is far from concluded. If we are to continue growing in our faith, it will be an everlasting process. Wax of course is very susceptible to heat; it tends to melt or lose its shape. So, the stamping of our soul should always be seen as an on-going requirement, a continuous refreshing and strengthening of our faith.

There are three ways I have found useful to help in this process which I think are worth sharing. Firstly, staying up to date with current theological thinking is incredibly important. The Church Times is particularly good at highlighting upcoming book launches and provides some excellent reviews.

Secondly, finding time in my day to just “be” with God. This is easier said than done. It is extremely easy to let the demands of this world crowd everything else out – and smartphones make this even more challenging. That time with God, however, is precious and one that I value enormously. It took a lot of trial and error on my part, exploring using all sorts of different apps at various times of the day, before I was able to find a routine that best worked for me. For me, what works is not having the same set time every day but to take each day on its own. Similarly, how I spend that time varies. Prayer is a constant but can be achieved in a variety of ways. One of my favourites is something I was taught by the Benedictine nuns at St. Benedict’s in West Malling. It is something that can be done in a group or just by yourself, and I find it enormously powerful. “*Lectio Divina*” or “*Divine Reading*” is not the same as Bible study and whilst the strict translation is “*Divine Reading*”, it becomes more akin to “*Divine Listening*” when we take the time to do it. It can be done at any time of the day on any passage of scripture. It is a mix of reflection, meditation, prayer and contemplation and concludes by saying the Lord’s Prayer.

Another method, which I find is best suited to the evenings, is Examen. This is part of the “Spiritual Exercises” of Saint Ignatius, founder of the Jesuits, but has become increasingly popular in recent years amongst Anglicans and Protestants generally. The five points of examen are Thanksgiving, Guidance, Review, Grace and Resolution. It is a simple but powerful method of sensing the activity

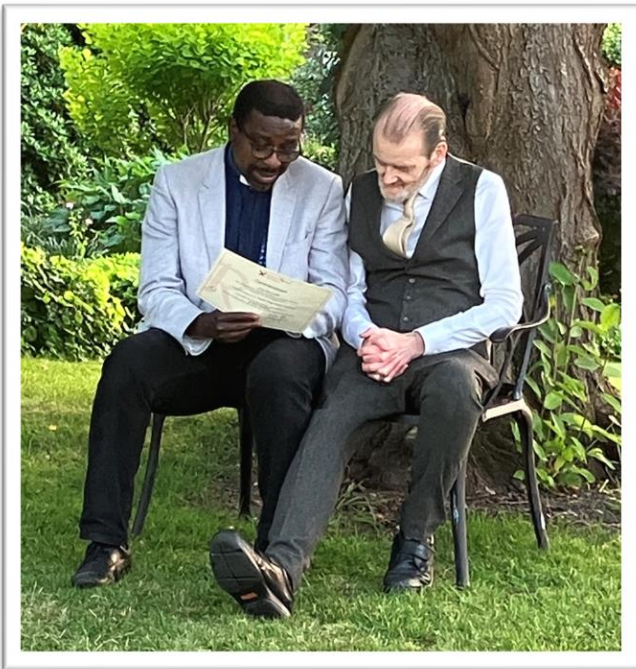
¹ The book being reviewed was “*Becoming by Beholding: The power of the imagination in spiritual formation*” by Lanta Davis, due to be published on 20th August 2024 in the UK by Baker Academic.

of God's Spirit in our everyday life. It forces us to consider the moments in our day when we felt close to God, and those moments when we didn't.

Both the book-reading and the time to "be" with God are solo affairs. The third reflects the importance of fellowship in our Christian formation and for me this is reflected in my parish formation team. In the process of the stamping of my soul, I could have had no better examples of who to copy. Back in June, I was delighted that they could all join me in Rochester in the Bishop's garden where I received my Bishop's Certificate. I describe the Certificate as getting my green "L" plate, or as Churchill may have said:

"Now this is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end. But it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning."

It is a stepping stone towards my goal of being licensed as a Lay Minister, hopefully, with the Bishop's consent, in May of 2025. Our Reader Tim Cripps talks openly of his delight that when he received his licence, it was our own choir singing in the service at Rochester Cathedral. We will have to wait and see if fate manages to strike twice.



Tim shares his Bishop's Certificate with Rev'd Ronnie

At the corner of our Parish Church sits a bench in memory of the first Lay Reader at St. Paul's, Ray (WAR) Bowler. If anyone can shed any light on the background to the WAR in brackets I would love to know. The tradition he started has continued uninterrupted until our most recent holders, Tim and Daphne. The name may have changed from Lay Reader to Lay Minister, but it is my deep hope that in 2025, in our 175th year as a Church and over 60 years after Ray first began, I may experience the privilege of joining all my predecessors in maintaining the tradition and serving our community for a good few years yet.

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

(Philippians 4:6-7 NRSV)

A reflection on ministry in the public square

Licensed Lay Ministers and Mayor and Mayoress of Bromley David and Anne-Marie Jefferys reflect on an unexpected ministry

What is it like to be Mayor and Mayoress and Licenced Lay Ministers? The answer is humbling and life affirming. We meet so many people doing extraordinary things in Bromley, volunteers serving others. We also see the problems in our community and society up close. Life is very tough for many; part of our role is to signpost help and to thank those who provide assistance. We see the Mayoralty as an extension of our LLM ministry.

There are many formal and informal interactions between the Mayor and the Anglican Church, with other denominations and other faith communities. We attend many special church services, fetes and festivals and represent the Borough at Installation and Induction Services (of which there are many these days)

We attend formal Diocesan services such as the D-Day and Anna Chaplaincy Evensongs. A small part of Bromley lies in

Southwark Diocese, so we also interact quite extensively with Bishop Christopher and his team. It was a great pleasure to entertain Bishop Jonathan, his wife and Archdeacon Allie Kerr as the last guests in the Mayors Parlour at the Old Palace, before we move to



the new Civic Centre. The Old Palace was the long-standing home of the Bishops of Rochester. We discussed the historic interactions between the Diocese and the area of Bromley, and current societal and ministry issues including homelessness, loneliness, social isolation, mental health and knife crime.

We continue our ministry at St Mary's Shortlands and assisting with services at Biggin Hill Memorial Chapel. Being in vacancy, we are running more services and activities at St Mary's, which Ann- Marie is coordinating – not an easy task.

A Civic Service was held on Sea Sunday, and we will hold a Civic Carol Service. We both undertook the inter-faith and public theology modules during our LLM training, and this is proving invaluable in our frequent interactions across the many faith groups. David is keen to encourage interfaith understanding and collaboration and continues to serve on SACRE (Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education).

Being Mayor is busy with around 90 events per month and rarely a day off. The Mayor in Bromley is particularly busy as we interact and support the other Mayors in both London and Kent.

The Mayor raises money for their charities through a range of fund-raising events. The Christian based Bromley Welcare is one of our charities along with Bromley Youth Music Trust and Alzheimer's. We have been able to continue our ministry in dementia support and were delighted to join Julia Burton-Jones on her recent 10 for 10 commemorative walk for Anna Chaplaincy.

We are also keen to use the convening role of the Mayoralty to highlight and support the work of other charities and community groups including walking and running for them, and publicising their work.



With Julia Burton Jones at Evensong celebrating 10th Anniversary of Anna Chaplaincy in Rochester Diocese

The themes we set for this Civic Year include health and wellbeing, the environment and promoting community cohesion and collaboration. We hope to bring these together in the celebration next April of the creation of the London Borough of Bromley 60 years ago.

If you are interested, you can follow us on social media through the Bromley website, follow us on social media and read the mayor's monthly reflections.

David and Ann-Marie Jefferys

When new beginnings also mean sad farewells

Saying goodbye to Margaret Wooding-Jones



Margaret with Mandy Holloway and Jennie White in Greenhithe Church

What a privilege for Mandy and I to serve in ministry alongside Margaret the last few years. She brought such wisdom, understanding and pastoral care into our team. We were able to pray, learn, discern, laugh and cry together. Adding a third LLM to our team could have been difficult – but for those who know Margaret you will understand that it certainly wasn't. She fitted in with the wider team as though she had always been there.

We are thankful for the messages she brought through her preaching, her encouragement in our own journeys and the times of prayer that we spent together. Her and Andy's departure will leave a great hole in our wider church, ministry team and in our daily lives – yet we are excited to

follow this next chapter as they step out into God's plan for them.

Jennie White LLM Greenhithe

Tribute to Gill Ellen, Reader (retired 12 Aug '24) by Terry Burton

Gill Ellen was born into the Church in 1940. Her father was a church warden at Chalk and her mother was the organist and choir mistress. Her family includes a line of missionaries. With her parents, she moved to High Halstow in 1951, when she joined the congregation at St Margaret's. Gill has three adult children, ten grandchildren and two great grandchildren.

In earlier years at St Margaret's Gill ran the Sunday school and was a flower arranger. Since then, she has contributed to outreach initiatives such as the annual rectory garden party and Christmas market.

Gill became a qualified Reader in the mid 1980's and subsequently for her own interests, obtained a Diploma in Theology, awarded by Kent University at Canterbury. Her role of leading and preaching

has been at St Margaret's, High Halstow, All Saints, Allhallows, St Peter and St Paul's, Upper Stoke, and St James at the Isle of Grain.



She frequently undertook welfare visits to congregational members who were infirm and was formally authorised to give communion by extension as circumstances dictated, which she carried out with responsibility and humility, guided by her deep, sincere, Christian faith. She also conducted funeral services at St Margaret's and at the Blue Bell Hill Crematorium.

Bishop Jonathan was delighted to make Gill Reader Emeritus as she stepped down from her formal Reader ministry. On behalf of Gill, I read the bishop's letter and the content of her certificate. Gill received a rapturous round of deserved applause before we all moved to the back of the church for a long-enjoyed cuppa, cakes and chat. All agreed it really was a church family event making lots of happy memories.

If you have an encouraging missional story please do share it with Mandy amanda.holloway@rochester.anglican.org so we can put it on the Facebook page or in the next newsletter. This was we can encourage one another and pray for kingdom growing ministries.

Diocesan News

Lay Ministry Conference

Saturday 9th November Christ Church Orpington 9.30 for 10am -3pm

I hope you have all received the date for our annual conference and have it in your diary. The conference is a great opportunity to catch up with old friends, to welcome new licensed lay ministers and to be encouraged in the ministry we share.

This year our focus is on Seeking First the Kingdom of God. We shall formally welcome Mandy as our new Warden of Lay Ministry and hear more about the diocesan strategy from Bishop Jonathan. The day will include times of worship and listening intentionally to God.

A sandwich lunch will be provided. Please email Tricia to let her know you are coming and to give her any dietary needs: tricia.cliffe@rochester.anglican.org
We look forward to sharing the day together.

Deputy Archdeaconry Lay Wardens

Thank you to our deputy archdeaconry lay wardens who offer so much support to those in ministry. Not only do they support those newly licensed, they are also involved in lay ministry reviews. They are locally available to support lay ministers and clergy when things can get a little difficult in ministry. They have discerned and need and are actively supporting lay ministers during interregnums. Deputy Lay Wardens are people of deep integrity, wisdom and pastoral care. Alongside their parish roles they offer support, a listening ear and wise counsel across the archdeaconry. You can meet up with your deputy warden at the conference.

Here are their contact details should you need to get in touch:

Bromley and Bexley

Philippa Linton lintonphilippa@hotmail.com

Mark Newman marknewman1955@gmail.com

Rochester

Val Butler val.a.butler@gmail.com

Vacancy to be filled shortly

Tonbridge

Paul Oakley poakley8th@gmail.com

Hilary Sutton hilary.sutton1@btopenworld.com

Safeguarding: a reminder

Please remember that it is your responsibility to ensure your safeguarding training is up to date and that you have an up-to-date DBS. Time travels quickly and it is easy to miss a renewal. Not having the relevant training and DBS can lead to a pause in your license and nobody wants this to happen. We make every effort to remind you when you need to book a training course but please do check for yourselves as we do not want anyone to slip through the net.

Short Courses

We are delighted that we have a new short course – Leading Public Worship. The course is designed for those who wish to learn more about the liturgy of a Service of the Word and consider a calling to share in leading worship. The course runs over 6 sessions. Like other short courses it is designed to be led locally. The certificate gives the holder the Bishop’s permission to lead a Service of the Word up to 12 times a year. If you would like more information please contact Ethlyn Roy Johnson at the Diocesan Office: ethlyn.roy-johnson@rochester.anglican.org

Other short courses available include Hearing and Speaking God’s word, Caring Concerns, Creation Care, Healing and Wholeness. Contact Ethlyn for more information.

And finally another new beginning

We are looking forward to welcoming Rev’d Andrew Dunlop appointed as the new director of Mission and Ministry Development who joins the team in January. Andrew comes from Ridley Hall Theological College in Cambridge having experience of parish and pioneering ministry. This is an exciting appointment for the diocese and we look forward to meeting Andrew and working with him to as we serve, and change to grow God’s kingdom across Rochester Diocese.