

A few words from the Vicar

Then Jesus said to his disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest.' (Matthew 9:37-38)

There is nothing to report for now regarding the proposed Ainsworth and Radcliffe Team. Hopefully there will be something I can report next month.

In the meantime, Revd Elaine Larkin's transfer to this parish as an Ordained Local Minister (OLM) has been agreed by Bishop David and, by the time you read this, her licensing by Bishop Chris (7.30pm Wednesday 4th March) will be just a few days away.

Please put the date in your diary and do come along to support and welcome her as she begins her ministry in this parish.

Elaine is not the first OLM licensed to this parish – you will recall that Revd Diane Barrett ministered here before I was appointed Priest in Charge – and hopefully not the last as Debra Johnstone is attending a Bishops' Advisory Panel in May to determine whether she will be selected for ordination training.

So, when I say that Elaine (and, God willing, Debra) will be serving here as an OLM all of you understand exactly what I mean, right! Or is OLM simply another TLA (Three Letter Acronym) that trips of one's lips and gives rise to blank looks all around!

Well, I know some of you understand what I'm talking about; PCC members (another TLA!), for example, who agreed to support Elaine's transfer. But, perhaps I shouldn't assume that everyone knows what an OLM is. So, here goes my attempt at an explanation ...

Some more TLAs for you: OLMs, like NSMs and MSEs, are SSMs. That's cleared that up then!

No. Well let me rephrase that: Ordained Local Ministers, like Non-Stipendiary Ministers and Ministers in Secular Employment, are Self-supporting Ministers. A little clearer, perhaps but not much!

How about this then?

OLMs are priests and being an OLM is just one of the ways in which ordained ministry in the Church of England operates. Like all clergy they are called to a ministry of Word and Sacrament. However, OLMs are distinctive in that they have a special local focus, set out in a ministry profile (a bit like a job description) agreed by their PCC. This might, for example, be in the area of baptism preparation and follow-up; or, at the other end of life, in bereavement counselling. An OLM might liaise with local youth groups, or have a particular ministry in schools. Always, though, the OLM serves as part of a team of lay and ordained ministers in the parish or community setting – that will certainly be the case here.



Pieter BRUEGEL the Elder,
The Corn Harvest (August) 1565

OLMs are unpaid by the church and, if they are not retired, earn a living from secular employment (although, to confuse matters, some OLMs are employed as chaplains).

I'll leave Elaine to tell you about herself as I know she is longing to get to know everyone at Christ Church. What I can say, however, is that Elaine previously served as an OLM in Seven Saints parish (Farnworth and Great Lever) – that's right, the parish where I served my curacy. So I know that she has a heart for pastoral care and has considerable experience in ministering to the sick, the bereaved, and the elderly. That was her focus in Seven Saints and that will, of course, be the focus of her ministry here in Ainsworth.

As ever, God's timing is impeccable. (Thinking about it, it couldn't be anything else really, could it?) We don't quite know what the future holds for this parish, but we do know that we are heading for a situation where you will be sharing my time with others. So, it is good to know that, in Elaine, God has made provision for pastoral care in this parish.

I must admit, I am looking forward to ministering alongside Elaine once more, and I hope you are looking forward to journeying along with her in ministry too.

As you get to know Elaine, I am praying that some of you will feel God's call to serve as an OLM in this parish too. And if you do sense a call from God for that or any other ministry, don't keep it to yourself; make an appointment to see me.

Every Blessing

Dave