

A few words from the Vicar

Something momentous is happening in the life of our Church this month. On Sunday 2nd July Debra will be ordained as a Deacon at Manchester Cathedral. This is a necessary prelude before she is ordained as a Priest in about 12 months' time.

All clergy serve as Deacons for at least 12 months before their ordination as Priests and, strictly speaking, always continue to serve as Deacons at the same time as being Priests. Being a Priest and Deacon at the same time reminds us that serving the needs of others is at the heart of our ministry, wherever we serve and in whatever capacity.

So, Debra will be ordained twice, first as a Deacon and then as a Priest. From day one, though, she will wear a dog collar and be known as 'The Reverend Debra Johnstone'.

Upon ordination, some newly ordained Deacons move to a new parish to serve as a Curate (I did). Others, however, remain in their home parishes and this is what Debra will be doing. Classed as an Ordained Local Minister (just like Revd Elaine), Debra will remain with us and will focus upon ministry amongst children and young adults.

It has been a long, sometimes difficult journey for Debra, first becoming a Reader and now ordination; beginning at Christ's Church, Harwood and then transferring to join us here in Ainsworth. In all this she has been faithful to God's call.

I am convinced that there are others within our congregation whom God is calling to ordination. It might be you, dear reader. If you feel it is you, do something about it; arrange to meet with me for a chat and, following a period of discernment, we can take things from there. You might be wrong, but if you are right and do nothing about your call, you will come to regret it.

And, whilst we are thinking about vocations, we are still in desperate need for someone to take over as our Treasurer!

Don't assume somebody else will volunteer because, so far, they haven't! Without a Treasurer, things will soon begin to get difficult for this Church. Anyway, that's enough moaning from me.

I must admit, I am really looking forward to working with Debra in her new role. I hope you are too!

Following ordination, Debra's training will continue and, as a Curate, she will be required to give priority to that training. A large chunk of her training, however, is parish based and, as Debra's training incumbent, I am responsible for delivering that.

So, it is not just Debra's role in parish life that changes on 2nd July, mine does too! I gain an additional responsibility, one that I welcome and am really looking forward to!

Also, this month my responsibilities change in an entirely different way. Licensed at the end of June, I take up my new role as Borough Dean for Bury.

Essentially, this is about promoting the civic role of the Church of England in the public, private, voluntary, community and faith sectors. This will mostly involve: building relationships; encouraging Anglican churches to engage in public life more; attending civic functions as Bishop David's representative; and, I am sure, attending lots of meetings.

In some ways I have already started, having attended a few meetings already and, most importantly, I attended the vigil organised by Bury Council following the recent atrocity at Manchester Area.

So, God has called Debra and I into something new. Listen to Him; He might be calling you to something new too!

Every Blessing

Dave