

The road to ordination training

Communications Officer, Anna, chats to one of our newest ordinands, Cerys Smith, about the vocations process and her path to ordination training.

Can you tell us about when you first felt the call to ordained ministry?

I have always had a sense of vocation just not necessarily a vocation to ordained ministry. I have always found and done work that I am passionate about that helps people, and in hindsight, the call to ordination started with my internship in the Reconciliation Ministry at Coventry Cathedral and taking it was a leap of faith for me. Following my internship, a calling to explore ordained ministry gradually built over a couple of months in a series of moments that included being at a Monday morning Holy Communion at the Cathedral where I had a clear thought that "I want to do that", I want to preside at the Eucharist; and an overwhelming sense of wanting to join in with what God was doing following a diocesan companionship link trip to Kenya, led by the Bishop of Warwick, that I was fortunate enough to be a part of.



What was your experience of the vocations process?

My experience of the vocations process has been overwhelmingly positive. Everyone I talked to, worked with and who helped me discern my calling, and ultimately being accepted for training, was so supportive, understanding with what I was going through, and encouraging of my vocation whether or not it turned out to be for ordination.

This year's BAP (Bishop's Advisory Panel) interviews were over Zoom, how did you find them?

It was very intense not just with the format of the interviews, only two 1 hour interviews on one day (normally the BAP is over 3 days), but also the fact it happened during lockdown and it was a new system they had been created and not tested before. However, Ellie Clack (DDO) and her team were amazing in keeping us calm, getting us answers and being so supportive throughout it all.

What is next for you?

I am moving to Durham in September to train at Cranmer Hall (a theology college at Durham University). I will be an ordinand there for 3 years, before, hopefully, returning to Coventry as a curate.

Please pray for Cerys and the other new ordinands as they begin their training in September.



Prayer Diary

September 2020

Come, ye thankful people, come, raise the song of harvest home.....

'Thank you so much for saying thank you', they said, 'it made all the difference'. We instill saying 'thank you' in our children, and with good reason. During Covid, we systematically said thank you, and it has been hugely appreciated.

Now we have reached Harvest, and we come to thank all those who supply our food, from the fishermen, farmers and growers along the supply chain to our supermarkets and shops. Maybe we cannot sing it, but nonetheless saying thank you is transformational. It is a powerful and vital thing: instead of looking at ourselves we focus on the giver.

Beyond thanking each other though, we thank God our heavenly Father for his total provision for us – in creation, in our fellow humanity and in Jesus Christ. It is also one of the greatest gifts we can give to God. From beginning to end, the Bible exhorts us to give thanks to him for all that he gives us: 'Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving' says the psalmist. God delights in that, when we stop looking at ourselves and focus on him, and acknowledge his worth.

Saying thank you reminds us that it is God who is ultimately our provider. But can we still thank God when times are really hard? Frequently in the Bible people have thanked God even when they were in the direst situation. From the horrors of prison, Paul was able to write: 'Sing and make melody to the Lord in your hearts, giving thanks to God the Father at all times'. David, again and again, ends the bleakest of Psalms with a note of praise. In Psalm 13, he moves from, 'How long, O Lord?' to 'I will sing to the Lord, because he has dealt beautifully with me.'

How can we do that, when life continues to be so difficult for many of us? Try to list the many blessings he has given us, whatever they may be – our material blessings, the people in our lives, his salvation in Jesus Christ, and for his continued presence and power in our lives. Holding on to, and thanking God, for his faithful goodness towards us allows him to pour out those blessings on us. It is transformational.

**Revd Canon Jill Tucker
Dean of Self Supporting Ministry**

St Mary's, Atherstone live streams to 1500 people

The Revd Michael Brandsma and the team at St Mary's, Atherstone have been streaming their mid-week and Sunday services on Facebook and receiving a large number of views.

Since the Covid 19 lockdown started in March, Michael began to use his platform on Facebook as a place to post encouragement and uplift. He would post words of encouragement on his own Facebook page, St Mary's, Atherstone's Facebook page and the Atherstone community forum.

The administration team that oversees the Atherstone Community Forum encouraged Michael to begin live streaming his Easter services.

On Palm Sunday, the 5th April, Michael streamed his first service on Facebook to reach out to the congregation and community. His son-in-law arrived in the morning to help set up and Michael had never done anything like this before. Live Facebook streaming was daunting for him. Yet, the service went well and was well received.

The church then streamed all of their Easter services: Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday. The viewing numbers kept growing.

After Easter, the church began to stream their regular worship on Facebook – their midweek worship on a Wednesday, their 10.30am Sunday worship as well as introducing a Friday at 12.01pm prayer time.

The services are a variety of liturgical patterns and are led by either Michael, or the church's Reader, John Stock. They invite various congregation members to participate in readings and prayers. They live stream by using two mobile phones placed on tripods, one streaming to the St Mary Atherstone Facebook page and the other to the Atherstone and Hinterland Forum Facebook page.

Michael says:

"The services have been seen by thousands of people. The mid-week viewings total an average of 1400 to 1600 views and Sunday viewing average approximately 1300 to as many as 2000 on two occasions."



UHCW NHS Trust uses 'Hymns We Love' reflections on hospital radio

In Spring this year, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, launched a free national phoneline as a simple new way to bring worship and prayer into people's homes while church buildings were closed during the coronavirus lockdown. The phone line has been very popular and will remain despite lockdown easing and some churches reopening.



The Daily Hope phone line have partnered with Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust Chaplaincy and Voluntary services who are piloting 'Hymns We Love' a selection of reflections based on hymns, their meaning and context written and narrated by Steve Cramer, on their hospital radio. This is a brilliant way to give peace and spiritual nourishment to patients, staff, and volunteers alike.

'Hymns We Love' is updated daily and provides a hymn and reflection. Hymns include, 'How great Thou art', 'Rock of Ages', 'Amazing grace', 'The Lord's my Shepherd', and 'And can it be?'.

Commenting on Daily Hope, the Archbishop of Canterbury says:

"Daily Hope has been a lifeline for tens of thousands of people in the last few months. We've heard stories of people using it who are regular church attenders and those who aren't. That's a testimony to the vital importance of Daily Hope."

Bishop Christopher says,

"Hymns heal the heart. Hospital chaplains know that well. By drawing out their meaning, these reflections will help the 'Hymns We Love' to bring solace to the soul and sing out hope in times of struggle as well as joy."

The Daily Hope phone line is available 24 hours a day on 0800 804 8044.

Thu 24

September is World Alzheimer's Month. We pray for all those affected by Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia. We give thanks for the progress made in treatments and care, and we pray for greater understanding of the disease.

We pray for the Diocesan Board of Education which meets today.

Fri 25

Foleshill St Paul. Clergy: Ali Hogger Gadsby. We pray for God's blessing upon the church members and the local community.

*Lancelot Andrewes, Bishop of Winchester, Spiritual Writer, 1626

*Sergei of Radonezh, Russian Monastic Reformer, Teacher of the Faith, 1392

Sat 26

Holbrooks St Luke. Clergy: Simon Oakes. We pray for God's blessing upon the church members and the local community.

We pray for the Bishop's Core and Extended Staff who meet today.

*Wilson Carlile, Founder of the Church Army, 1942

Sun 27

Sixteenth
Sunday after
Trinity

During British Food Fortnight, we give thanks for the growers and producers of food in this country. We thank God for the care that goes in to making food safe for us to eat. We remember those around the world who do not have enough food.

*Vincent de Paul, Founder of the Congregation of the Mission, 1660

Mon 28

Radford St Nicholas. Clergy: Andrew Coleman. We thank God for those who have become regular worshippers at our church. We pray for a resolution to the demolition of the derelict old St Nicholas' church building and for members of our congregation who are unwell at this time

Tue 29

Michael and All
Angels

We pray for World Heart Day. On average more than 17 million people die from heart-related illnesses every year. We pray that this awareness day encourages people more attentive to their heart health.

We pray for the Diocesan Finance Group which meets this morning.

Wed 30

We give thanks for the ministry of retired clergy and the support they provide in so many ways to the lives of our churches across the diocese.

We also pray that new clergy and their families will settle in quickly and feel at home in Coventry diocese.

*Jerome, Translator of the Scriptures, Teacher of the Faith, 420

Cycle of Prayer - September 2020

With a focus on parishes and schools in Coventry North Deanery

Tue 1

Radford St Francis of Assisi. Clergy: Interregnum. We pray for God's blessing upon the church members and the local community.

*Giles of Provence, Hermit, c.710

Wed 2

At the start of a new academic year, we pray for all those going back to school or starting at new schools. We pray that they all may know Christ's presence with them, ahead of them and alongside them in their schools.

*The Martyrs of Papua New Guinea, 1901 and 1942

Thu 3

Longford. Clergy: Rosalyn Murphy. We pray for God's blessing upon the church members and the local community.

We pray for the Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Care of Churches (DAC).

*Gregory the Great, Bishop of Rome, Teacher of the Faith, 604

Fri 4

Ansty & Shilton. Clergy: Andrew Coleman. We thank God for the Christian fellowship within the congregations. We would like the diocesan family to pray for the loneliness and isolation in these difficult times.

*Birinus, Bishop of Dorchester (Oxon), Apostle of Wessex, 650

Sat 5

Allesley. Clergy: Elizabeth Kerr. Readers: Fey and Colin Holtum. We thank God for continued enthusiastic worship using people's varied gifts and the response to the needs of people during the pandemic. We pray that the church will continue to grow in spiritual depth and numbers when our new Rector, the Revd Lizzy Holland, joins in October.

Sun 6

Thirteenth
Sunday after
Trinity

September is Childhood Cancer Awareness Month. Childhood cancer is devastating to sufferers and their friends and families. This annual international awareness month aims to raise support and funding for children with cancer. We pray for children diagnosed with cancer.

*Allen Gardiner, Founder of the South American Mission Society

Mon 7

Coventry St George. Clergy: Jennifer Wickham, Carolyne Powell. Reader: Shirley Trafford. We pray for God's blessing upon the church members and the local community.

We pray for the Diocesan Business Committee which meets this morning.

Tue 8

Today is UNESCO's International Literacy Day, a day to raise awareness globally on the issues surrounding adult and child literacy. 775 million adults lack minimum literacy skills, with two thirds being women. We pray this day highlights the importance of literacy and promotes change.
*The Birth of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Wed 9

St Laurence's Primary School, Coventry. Headteacher: Michelle Cuskelly. We pray for God's blessing on pupils, teachers, staff and governors in this school community.
*Charles Fuge Lowder, Priest, 1880

Thu 10

We pray for clergy and church leaders who are unwell. We remember especially those who cannot work and minister while they recover or receive treatment. We pray for sensitivity and understanding in churches and congregations, and for unity in working together.

Fri 11

Coventry Holy Trinity. Clergy: Graeme Anderson, Bill Walton, Jo Ognjanovic. Readers: Sue Shepherd, Geoff Wilcox. We thank God for people from all sorts of backgrounds coming to a committed faith in Jesus. Please pray that many more people will become Christians, and that they will grow a resilient faith.

Sat 12

Today is the Readers licensing service at St Mary's, Cubbington. We pray that God may guide and encourage the Readers being admitted and licensed (Helen Merrigan, Steven Cook, Chris Dronfield, Susan Turner) and the Readers transferring in from other dioceses. We pray for Bishop John and Jo King (Warden of Readers) as they conduct this service.

Sun 13

Fourteenth
Sunday after
Trinity

Keresley. Clergy: Mark Norris. We pray for God's blessing upon the church members and the local community.
*John Chrysostom, Bishop of Constantinople, Teacher of the Faith, 407

Mon 14

Holy Cross Day

We pray for April Gold and all those who work with her at the Diocesan Board of Education. We give thanks to God for all that they do supporting, managing, caring for and inspiring schools in the diocese.

Tue 15

Foleshill St Laurence. Clergy: Gareth Irvine, Jenny Irvine. We pray for God's blessing upon the church members and the local community. We pray for the Glebe Committee which meets this afternoon.
*Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, Martyr, 258

Wed 16

We pray for our Bishops, Christopher and John; for their ministry, positions of responsibility, their times of rest and their families.
*Ninian, Bishop of Galloway, Apostle of the Picts, c.432
*Edward Bouverie Pusey, Priest, Tractarian, 1882

Thu 17

We thank God for all healthcare staff who work in our local communities, our GP and dental surgeries and clinics, our community hospitals and those who work in the field of mental healthcare.
*Hildegard, Abbess of Bingen, Visionary, 1179

Fri 18

Coventry St John Baptist. Clergy: Dexter Bracey. We give thanks for our on-going life of prayer throughout lockdown, and for the opportunity to gather again in person for worship. We pray for those unable to return to church yet, for the many families mourning the loss of loved ones, and for the people of Spon End whose homes are scheduled for demolition.

Sat 19

September is Blood Cancer Awareness Month. Blood cancers are collectively the third biggest cancer killer in the UK but awareness of the different types of blood cancer such as leukaemia, lymphoma and myeloma, and their symptoms are low. We pray that this month helps to raise awareness and save lives.

Sun 20

Fifteenth
Sunday after
Trinity

Creator God we give you thanks for all of our farmers as they harvest the crops that feed us. We thank you for the skills of those who will be bringing the harvest in, and we ask that the weather be favourable. We pray that the harvest is bountiful enough to share with all those who are in need.
*John Coleridge Patteson and his Companions, Martyrs, 1871

Mon 21

Matthew,
Apostle and
Evangelist

Today marks the International Day of Peace - an annual event designed to bring peace to every individual across the globe. It is also designed to be a day of ceasefire. We pray for God's help in our own lives to cease fighting, stop arguing and make peace with others. We pray for God's dynamic intervention of peace into the most troubled places of conflict.

Tue 22

Today is World Car Free Day. Motorists are encouraged to leave their cars at home for the day to decrease pollution and make roads safer. The event promotes the improvement of safe cycle lanes and walking routes. We pray that the villages, towns and city in our diocese become safer places for cyclists and pedestrians.

Wed 23

We thank God for our Archdeacon Pastor, Sue Field, and pray for God's blessing on her work and ministry, and her family. We pray for the Parsonages Committee which meets this afternoon.