

Ministry - Lay and Ordained

In June we ordain new deacons and priests for the diocese: always a thrilling and encouraging time. In September we license lay ministers; this year we are expanding that into a Festival of Lay Ministry. Three great occasions at the Cathedral each year, celebrating ministry, ordaining, commissioning, sending men and women out into God's harvest field.

Those being ordained or licensed have been on a journey of discernment, training, and formation, for several years. They have made sacrifices to get to this point. Their journey will continue as they experience the joys and the heartaches, as they continue to learn and to grow. We are so grateful to them for hearing God's call, for submitting themselves to the discernment and the direction of the Church, for giving themselves in the service of the gospel and of other people.



Ministry in the church is for lay and clergy together. The idea that it is all the vicar's job has been popular at times in church history, but that doesn't make it right. Even the view that the vicar looks after the worship while the churchwardens look after the building, doesn't get it right either. The New Testament is clear about four great truths.

First, that ministry in the local church is always plural, corporate, shared.

Second, that some are to be set apart (ordained as we would say, with the implication of being freed from the necessity to earn a living elsewhere) for an overall leadership role.

Third, that the ministry of the church is to be both inward looking, considering and aiming to meet the needs of the members, and outward looking, seeking to take the good news of Christ to those currently outside the church, and to draw them in.

Fourth, that ministry is not just a matter for those who are designated (in our terms, ordained or licensed as lay ministers) but belongs to and is to be exercised by the whole people of God. All baptised Christians are called at the very least to be witnesses to Christ's resurrection.

Of course, all this needs working out at the local level. I encourage you in your churches and PCCs to discuss these things, and see how they might make a difference where you are.

With best wishes

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