

Surprised at being called!

reflections of a newly Licensed Lay Minister

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I didn't expect to be here today Licenced as a Lay Minister, and if I'm honest that's all still sinking in. My early contact with the Diocesan Vocations Team allowed a rather excited and enthusiastic new (ish) Christian the opportunity to explore her faith deeper.

There were so many unanswered questions and too many questions to answer so she decided to attend a vocations advisory day called 'It's your Calling' day at St Johns Meopham, as an excited, hungry new (ish) Christian who realised the reality of Jesus during and Alpha Course in 2009.

I am a mother of 2, a wife of 1 and a self-employed childminder what was I thinking? Not, "Go for it" or any positive thoughts. Mostly I recall thoughts like "yeah right, **you** called by Jesus'? Think again, you can't do this.'

But a bible verse that struck me at the time was 'Seek the Lord with all your heart and mind', without knowing the destination. Sounds ludicrous? Little did we know the adventurous journey ahead.

With the support of my church family and agreement from my incumbent I was encouraged to apply to attend a training course called FCM Foundation in Christian Ministry (other training courses are available!), a good place to start for someone like me!

Saturday 21st September 2013 came – and the first training session to gain a foundation in Christian Ministry. Lay Ministry was not at this point my destination, far from it!

If I'm honest I was not sure what to expect, but I knew my church was behind me. Stepping out in this way was one of the hardest things I have had to do. I didn't sit with the careers advisor at school or my probation officer some years after and say I wanted to be a Christian, let alone minister in the Church of England in any capacity.

The course allowed me the space to examine Christianity, including its history and heritage. The journey enabled us to battle the doubts and call on Gods strength because it's a time consuming course and calls on a high level of commitment and academics, rightly so! I am not an academic but God loves what I and my family have to offer. Training is a transforming process which God does the equipping for. God never faulted on his promise, his help came in many different ways. It's a privilege to have met incredible people and be support by the living God in them all.



Our thanks go to those who believed in God's ability to continually work through us.

If you're thinking about others in your church and their calling I encourage you, explore God's capability with them. He thinks we are all worth equipping and is waiting to journey with your church congregation members. Boundaries do not put God off - they challenge us to allow Him to show us more of His character. The gift is seeing Him at work you have the potential in your churches to encourage and grow the next generation of leaders. Chris and his team work very hard to maintain an excellent training system where God can grow change and challenge not just those undertaking training but those leading it too.

I am sure like others, some didn't think I would get through but then we limit the exclusiveness of God's grace and love to us. The reason I am able to be here today as a Licensed Lay Minister is because God equipped as I responded.

Jesus embraced change and Lay Ministry in this concept is changing the 21st century Church. The 21st century ministers are already in your churches, and it's time to see what God can do through them. If you think training would help others like me— take the next step and find out.