

Advent 2008: The Way prepared

Reader Quiet Morning at St Thomas, Kirkholt

by Frank Clarke; Reader, St Thomas Kirkholt

Led by the Revd Sue Morgan, priest-in-charge at St Thomas's, the quiet morning took place on the 6th of December. After coffee at 9-30am the quiet morning started promptly at 10-00am and was divided into four sections; each section having its own title, Waiting, Preparing, Recognising and Receiving; each section representing the four Sundays of Advent and leading to the birth of Jesus our Saviour. Sue likened each section to the joys of a mother-to-be.

Waiting

Just as we wait for the expected event at the beginning of Advent; likewise, a mother to be waits for her expected event.

Preparing

Parents prepare for their event by decorating a room in the house and fitting it out with the necessary things required for a nursery. In Advent we prepare for the expected one through John the Baptist. In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming; "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near." This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said, "The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the



Lord, make his paths straight.'" (Matthew 3: 1-3).

Recognising

Recognising was in the form of a prayer responsorial. The essence of prayer is to hear the voice of another, of Christ, but likewise to hear the voice of each person I meet in whom Christ also addresses me. His voice comes to me in every human voice,

and his face is infinitely varied. God became incarnate so that we might contemplate his face in every face. Every human face is an icon of Christ, discovered by a prayerful person. (Catherine de Hueck Doherty).

Receiving

Just as a mother gives birth and receives and celebrates the gift of a new life, we receive and celebrate the gift of Christ Jesus at Christmas. But, in order to receive the gift of Christ coming to us in the form of a child, it is necessary for us to be empty-handed. Christ Jesus, who though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself. (Philippians 2:6).

But we have this treasure in earthen vessels to show that the transcendent power belongs to God, and not to us. (2 Cor 4:7).

Each section of the morning included a quiet time for prayer and much thoughtful thinking.

The morning concluded at 12-30pm after which a lunch of soup and roll followed by cheese and fruit was served.



Readers' Digest

Supporting Reader ministry

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND
Diocese of Manchester

March 2009

Stop Press

You will have received a letter about a celebration marking the end of the Manchester-based OLM and Reader training course, BUT due to diary clashes, the date has had to be changed to Saturday 20 June at 6.30pm. We apologise for any inconvenience this may cause. The venue is the same – Manchester Cathedral. We hope you can still come.

Former Harpurhey Curate to Chair Central Reader Council

The Archbishops of Canterbury and York have jointly appointed the Rt Revd Robert Paterson, Bishop of Sodor and Man, to chair the Central Readers' Council with effect from the end of April 2009. Bishop Robert will succeed the Rt Revd Graham Dow, Bishop of Carlisle, who is retiring this year.

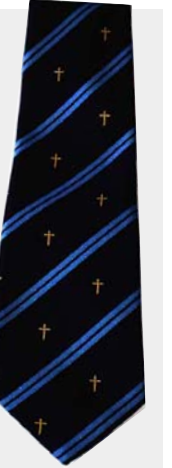


Rt. Revd. Robert Paterson, Bishop of Sodor and Man, Chair of the Central Readers' Council

Bishop Robert said: "Readers play a vital role in parishes up and down the country and I have seen at first hand the immense contribution they make to building up the local worshipping Christian community in many ways.

To be invited to chair the body that is charged with supporting Readers' development, fostering a sense of community between them and raising their profile within the Church is an honour and a task I am delighted to accept."

Badges & Ties



If Readers wish to purchase a Reader's Badge, Tie or a Car Sticker, go to the Readers website: www.readers.cofe.anglican.org and use the search tool for 'badge'.

They are available from the CRC (Central Readers Council) office (tel: 020 7898 1419) or by email.



If your details change, please let us know

Please contact: Natty Gray
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Ideas and/or material for the next Readers' Digest can be sent to Christine Sandiford by email to christine@sandiford.info or by post to 330 Lapwing Lane, Manchester M20 6UW

Obituary Notices

With sadness, we record the deaths of the following Readers Emeriti:

Rex Moore, Reader Emeritus at St John the Baptist Smallbridge, died on 12 September 2008
Mr A G E Mitchell, Reader Emeritus at St Mary Davyhulme, died on 3 October 2008.

Readers: Some Facts & Figures

Readers – Diocese of Manchester	Manchester Archdeaconry	Bolton Archdeaconry	Rochdale Archdeaconry
Licensed 2003 - '08	21	15	12
Licensed pre-2003	28	55	29
Readers-in-Training	5	7	5
Emeriti	25	34	16

New safeguarding training for parishes

by Peter Reiss

With this mailing you should receive a letter from the bishop and a sheet giving information about the Independent Safeguarding Authority.

From October this year, when the new legislation comes into force, parishes will not only have to ensure appropriate people have been "CRBed" but also been checked under this new system referred to as "Vetting and Barring". It will affect every parish, and primary responsibility will lie with incumbents and PCCs.

Training is being provided in June for incumbents and there will be deanery

training events in September for parish officials.

Because this is so important, the bishop would warmly welcome all Readers to the initial training and hopes that you will be able to take a lead in your parishes in implementing this.

If you can go on June 23rd to either session please book in through Helen Fallone at Church House.



Manchester's First Women Readers

By Christine Sandiford, Sub Warden of Readers

On the 9th of May in 1969 women were licensed for the first time as Readers in the Church of England. Although no women were licensed in the Diocese of Manchester that year, three were licensed the following year, on 20 June 1970.

One of them is Margaret Heeney, now Emeritus Reader at St James', Moss Side. Christine Sandiford went to see her and learn about her life as a Reader.

CS – How long have you been in Manchester?

MH – I was born here – in Fallowfield - and I grew up in the parish of Holy Innocents. I taught Sunday School there and went to teacher-training college in Liverpool where I got an Old Testament and New Testament Studies Certificate.

CS – What led you to becoming a Reader?

MH – Our Rector at Holy Innocents, Canon Paul Chalmers, must have been very keen to support women's ministry because in March 1970 he asked four ladies in the church to consider Reader ministry. I never would have thought of it if it hadn't been suggested to me.

Two of us decided we would like to do it –me and Dr Celia Hughes, who taught in the

Theology Department at the University. Since it was suggested that we might be suitable to be licensed without training, we had to go before the Readers' Board at Church House. (I remember there being a tremendous thunderstorm as we went in to be interviewed – which made us laugh!)

There was also a candidate named Avril from Oldham. All three of us were accepted and we were licensed on 20 June that year at St John, Flixton. The Warden of Readers at the time was the Bishop of Hulme, Kenneth Ramsey.

CS – How was your ministry received – since it was new to have women readers?

MH – The reception was mixed, to be honest. There was some opposition by male Readers at first but that eased off. Some people were delighted, but others could not accept it. I remember being horrified by some of the letters in the Readers' Magazine – terrible letters of hatred from some men. There came a time when a new Rector in my church did not approve of women's ministry, so there was nothing for me to do there as a Reader. As I had already moved house to Chorlton, it seemed the right time to look for another church and we parted amicably.



Margaret Heeney (left) with Canon Paul Chalmers (centre) and Dr Celia Hughes (right) in 1971



Margaret Heeney - a Reader since 1970

For awhile I was licensed as a Diocesan Reader, but then in 1984 Revd Gerry Wheale at St James', Moss Side asked me to come help him and I have been happy there ever since. I think it was the Holy Spirit working when Gerry called me.

CS – What have you enjoyed most about Reader Ministry?

MH – I like preaching the most. When we started in 1970 no Readers were allowed to read the Gospel or administer at Holy Communion. Gradually, as lay people were encouraged to do more in the church, Readers were allowed to do more, too.

One thing I really enjoyed was the Readers' Summer School at Selwyn College, Cambridge. I went for three or four years.

CS – Did you ever consider ordination?

MH – No, I loved teaching too much. I worked at Beaver Road Junior School in Didsbury, and later became the Headteacher at St Matthew's Stretford, and then St John's Farnworth.

I also did a lot of Mothers' Union work in the diocese, but I gave that up three years ago. Gerry Wheale asked me to join the Moss Care Housing committee which I have enjoyed for many years.

CS – What do you do for fun?

MH – Now that I have retired, I enjoy gardening, and I have recently taken up knitting again. One good thing about knitting is that you can pray while you knit.

CS - Do you have anything more you want to say to our readers?

MH – I would recommend being a Reader to anyone. If you are interested, talk to someone about it and find out if it is right for you.

Reader Ministry in Manchester Diocese

Warden of Readers:

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Warden's Administrator

Mrs Natty Gray
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Are you able to tell me if I can (as Reader Emeritus) conduct funerals outside my Parish? A parish priest telephoned over the weekend from a neighbouring parish to ask if I would lead such a funeral at their church.

A Reader Emeritus with the bishop's Permission to Officiate may conduct funerals in any parish with the agreement of the incumbent (or Area Dean in the case of a vacancy). However, as most Emeritus Readers remain attached to one parish, most

FREE places on new diocesan ministry course

A new course begins in September 2009 for lay people who may not yet be sure what they are called to, but feel they want to explore the idea of ministry more generally.

Foundations for Ministry is a part-time course, designed to help people find and grow in the ministry to which God is calling them. This could be in a variety of situations: in the community; at work, in the family, or the many opportunities for ministry in the church.

The course consists of an induction day at the start of the course and two Saturdays, plus 24 Wednesday evening sessions, spread over 3 terms from September to June. All sessions are held at Church House Manchester.

Do you know people in your church whose ministry might be encouraged through *Foundations for Ministry*? Find out more from Jayne Prestwood at Church House (0161 828 1456). The course costs £60 - though in 2009 we are offering 20 free places, one person per parish. Grants are also available. Applications need to be in by July 31st.

Help is available

Readers Benevolent Fund

Readers and Readers Emeritus are reminded that a grant from the above Fund is available where they have special needs, such as serious illness, or financial difficulties, due to a variety of circumstances.

Further details from Geoff Preston at 30 St Peter's Road, Bury, BL9 9RB



Your Questions Answered

by Chris Bracegirdle, Warden of Readers

of the time it is in that parish where they would normally conduct funerals.

What is the minimum age anyone can come into Reader ministry?

There is no published minimum age for becoming a Reader. However, given the nature and style of the training, the minimum age for embarking on training would be 18 – ie, that at which a person might embark on a higher education course. It would be likely therefore, that the minimum age for licensing would be 21.

Dates for your Diary

Monday 6 April 2009 - 10.30am

Blessing of the oils at Manchester Cathedral. The Bishop of Manchester will be inviting Readers to join clergy at this annual Holy Week service. You should get a letter. Readers invited to robe.

Friday 15 May 2009 - 7.30pm

Celebration of 40 years of Women Reader Ministry at St Paul's Church, Moor Lane, Kersal, Salford. A Service to mark the 40th anniversary of 9 May 1969, when women were first licensed as Readers. The Theme is "Using gifts to build the future". Margaret Heeney, our longest licensed woman Reader, will be the Speaker. Readers (including Emeriti and those in their final year of training) are invited to robe.

Saturday 20 June 2009 - 6.30pm

OLM/Reader Celebration at Manchester Cathedral. The Manchester based Reader and OLM training course comes to an end this summer as the move towards regional training is completed. To mark the end of the training course there will be a special service of celebration and thanksgiving. The Bishop of Manchester will preside. Former students are especially welcome. Readers (including Emeriti and those in their final year of training) are invited to robe - please contact Jayne Prestwood (0161 828 1456).

Sunday 12 July 2009 - 3pm

Reader Licensing Service at Manchester Cathedral. New Readers will be licensed. All Licensed Readers are invited to robe.

Saturday 19 September 2009 - All Day

Reader Day Conference at St Paul's, Kersal. Keynote speaker Canon Dr Christina Baxter, Principal of St John's College Nottingham. Book the date, further details and timings will follow.

– Let's challenge the Diocese to find a young one!

Am I too old to become a Reader?

Readers, should they want it, are given the bishop's permission to officiate from their 70th birthday. In order for this to happen, the Reader needs to have been licensed to a public ministry in the diocese and therefore needs to have been licensed before reaching his/her 70th birthday.