

EASTER NEWSLETTER FOR READERS (LLM)

The Warden writes...

Do keep safe and well in these difficult times, good servants of the Lord. I know you are continuing to work, in prayer and study, contacting the vulnerable, supporting families and conducting funerals. But do stay safe in all this. It will come to an end and our good Lord is ever with us.



To keep us safe we have had to cancel the Quiet Day and Readers Weekend at Holland House. This decision was inevitable as Holland House itself is closed to visitors for the foreseeable future. It is too early to say whether it will open again in time for the Quiet day there planned for 27th July. For everybody's sake, I would very much like to see very many of you there on that day. But at this point we do not know what will be.

What I do know is that none of you is involuntarily out of pocket in terms of donations/contributions to the costs. All your cheques have been shredded and will not be presented for payment. Rest assured on that.

Thank you for all you do and are in these difficult times and pray they end soon

Love and Prayers
Canon Sue

A note from the Editor...

I do not think that any of us would have predicted at the beginning of the year how events would unfold. The Lent Newsletter has become the Easter Newsletter, as publication was delayed as we waited to see how Covid-19 would affect our lives. Our thoughts and prayers are with you if you have lost family and friends or have suffered yourself.

Normally the newsletter published in the spring includes details of gatherings, training opportunities and celebrations, but we do not know when we will be able to gather again, to learn and share together or celebrate.

With services cancelled, I wonder how life has changed for you?

What have you been doing that is new?

What book that has languished on your bookshelf have you finally got round to reading and could review?

Do drop me a line at readercommunicationsworcs@gmail.com

Kind regards,
Rosie

The Dudley Archdeaconry Warden Writes...



HOW TIME FLIES WHEN YOU ARE HAVING FUN...

I can barely believe that it is coming up to 3 years since Bishop John rang one evening and invited me to take on the role of Dudley Archdeaconry Warden of Readers. I was so excited, that I later had to apologise to him for my somewhat over enthusiastic response, but he just smiled (the way he does) and said not to worry, it was fine and he understood.

Well, all these months later, what is it like, does 'the job' live up to my initial excitement and enthusiasm, is it what I expected?

Firstly, it is wonderful, a tremendous privilege and a great joy, but it does come with an even greater feeling of responsibility. It is definitely exciting and is far more than I ever expected or imagined, a definite learning curve in so many respects. It's not until you see behind the scenes, that you realise all the hard work which goes into facilitating Reader Ministry throughout the Diocese, it doesn't just happen on its own.

One of my greatest joys as Archdeaconry Warden begins way before someone even commences Reader training. Many hours are spent meeting with and coming alongside ordinary everyday people with so much potential, so much faith and so much to offer. Together we discuss and uncover their hopes and expectations, discuss God's calling upon their lives and in turn, their response and calling to Reader Ministry. It is a true delight to encourage them in their journey and exploration, to see them taking up the challenge, flourishing and fulfilling that calling, and ultimately receiving the Bishop's Licence to serve as LLM/Reader in their Church family and local community. Which is why I am particularly looking forward to the Celebration and Licensing Service this year, as several of those being Licensed, will be some of the first people I recommended for training. 'WOW!' I tend to wear my heart on my sleeve, so I shall definitely be bringing tissues along to cope with my tears of sheer joy.

Another of my joys in the job is helping to support existing Readers, especially in times of uncertainty or difficulty, it is never a chore for me to simply sit with someone, to listen and to pray. We all need support and encouragement at times and a listening ear and a few words of encouragement are often all that is required - a care or problems shared. So please, never hesitate to call me if you need someone just to be there.

Is it what I was expecting? Well, in a nutshell, NO, it is far more than I was expecting. There are many aspects to being Archdeaconry Warden which have challenged me, and still continue to challenge me, but which also enable me to grow inwardly and deepen who I am. Being Archdeaconry Warden has changed who I am, hopefully continuing to make me a better person, better able to live out my calling to love and serve.

At my interview for 'the job' nearly 3 years ago, I joked that I would be a Champion for Readers and Reader Ministry that is still my goal, still my focus, but I don't do it on my own. Together we are a team, with God as our Hero and us as his Champions.

Kath Davis
Dudley Archdeaconry Warden

Funerals During the Covid-19 Outbreak

Many things are having to happen in a different way, including funerals. If you have the Bishop's permission to take funerals and are asked to officiate, do talk through the effects of the restrictions with the funeral directors.

Guidance is available on the national readers website - which has been renamed Transforming Ministry <https://transformingministry.co.uk> Do take the opportunity to have a look at the website, including the section on funerals, so that even if you are not able to officiate, you will be aware of what restrictions have been in place.

Do keep an eye on the Transforming Ministry website as it is being developed to include training opportunities, forums and much more.



The Eddy

For Mary

The smooth mill stream glides on, an eddy in the midst,
a mini whirlpool, spinning giddy ring,
endlessly round and round within the flowing stream,
with no way out.

A floating leaf, carried upon the stream,
as it floats past, suddenly trapped
within the whirlpool, twisted round and round
for ever seemingly with no way out.
Then just as suddenly it is released,
continues on its way in flowing stream.

I am that leaf borne on life's stream,
then just as suddenly plunged in a whirlpool.
Round and round I go, dizzy and sick
unable to escape or even think,
round and round endlessly with no way out.
Then just as suddenly, when I've lost hope,
I am released, continue in life's stream towards my goal.

Lord, teach me to trust when in life's stream
I'm sometimes caught,
trapped in the whirlpool of cruel circumstance,
event's I cannot control, go round and round in panic,
cannot think, let alone trust.
Help me to know I will emerge once more
into life's stream, be carried towards you,
my journey's end.

Taken from Autumn Reflections by Joan Copeland
and used with permission

Virtual Afternoon tea with the lovely Joan Copeland

Let us begin with a choice of drink and a slice of cake. What would your choice be?

At 5pm every day we stop for a gin and tonic (just tonic during Lent!) and on Birthdays and Christmas I enjoy a gin and Dubonnet.

I'm not really a cake person, but I do enjoy my home-made Christmas cake with marzipan and icing, and with the fruit pre-soaked in home-made wine.



To get us underway please choose for us a hymn, song or piece of music and tell us a bit about why you chose it.

I know, love and sing lots of hymns an incredibly important source of theology for many people (and of theological irritation for theologians!). I used to sing hymns to the sheep when I helped farmers with lambing, now I sing them as I prayer walk the parish. If pushed, I would choose 'O Thou who camest from above' which I often use as a prayer.

Can you tell us a little of your family background? Have you always lived in Worcestershire?

I was born in 1942 in Wimbledon and brought up in Essex 'a Womble' and an 'Essex girl'. My parents were church going and believing Christians, so I suppose I was a 'cradle Anglican'. After attending Colchester County High School, I read theology at King's College, London, where I met my husband, Chris. We were married the same year that he was ordained, so we have always worked as a team. After a disastrous curacy, we moved to Droitwich, where our second and third daughters were born. We spent 20 years in deprived areas of Birmingham, where we were involved with the charismatic movement and worked with Rev. David MacInnes. We then returned to Worcestershire, where Chris was Diocesan Stewardship Missioner, and vicar of Holt and Grimley. After eight years in the Forest of Dean, we retired to Malvern where we have lived since 2003.

How long have you been a Reader and where are you based?

I was licensed as a Reader in Birmingham in 1978. I was involved in training Readers in Birmingham and Worcester Dioceses, and was an Extension Studies tutor for St. John's, Nottingham. I am currently based as a Reader with P.T.O. at our parish churches in Malvern Link with Cowleigh, where exciting new things are happening under our vicar, Rev Phillip Johnson.

Looking back, can you pinpoint a moment when your faith journey began?

I cannot remember a time when I was not a Christian, and have prayed since childhood. I have had at various times significant spiritual experiences in prayer, and been helped to grow in faith by so many people. My R.E. teacher was very influential. I followed in her footsteps by going to King's College, and still have her blazer badge which she gave me, rather like Elisha and Elijah's cloak.

What time in your life was your faith important to you?

Probably when I suffered many years of severe and chronic clinical depression in my twenties, including six weeks in Powick Mental Hospital (as it was then.) I couldn't communicate with anyone or read books, apart from one sentence at a time of Julian of Norwich. But even in the despair and darkness, I was aware that Jesus was in the pit with me.

If you were asked to pick a character in the Bible other than Jesus, who would you pick and why?

I think Jeremiah, always my favourite prophet. He wasn't afraid of arguing with God, frequently, had a poetic imagination, and faithfully kept on proclaiming his unpopular message for forty years before it was fulfilled.

This is tough I know but can you pick one Bible verse and explain why you would choose that one?

'Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, Rejoice. Let your moderation be known unto all. The Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing; but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.' Philipians 4 v.4-7

More than one verse, I know, but this was the passage which was always read at the end of term at school. It goes on to mention *'whatsoever things be of good report'*, which drew wry smiles. I took it for my Rule of Life as a teenager and have tried to live by ever since.

As Readers we all have different ministries, what part of your ministry do you find most fulfilling?

I am at heart a teacher, so my main ministry as a Reader has been preaching and teaching. Despite having gained B.D. Hons and M. Phil. Degrees, and an Archbishops' Diploma for Readers, my most satisfying project has been gathering together the poetry I have been writing all my life and publishing 'Autumn Reflections', which is basically my spiritual biography in poetry. My present ministry consists of less preaching and more prayer, which feels to be going in the right direction as I get older.

Prayer. As Readers we encounter a vast array of liturgy. If you could chose one prayer, other than The Lord's Prayer, what would it be and why?

A prayer of St Francis, not the most well known one, which I usually say at the beginning of the day, especially when life is difficult. It encourages trust in God and hope for the future.

Lord, help me to live this day	Quietly	Easily,
To lean upon your great strength	Trustfully	Restfully,
To await the unfolding of your will	Patiently	Serenely
To meet others	Peacefully	Joyously
To face tomorrow	Confidently	Courageously
		Amen.

**Thank you, Joan, for sharing with us. You have given us much to ponder on and we are very grateful. Our prayers are with you as you continue to serve and encourage others.
God bless.**

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Dudley	- Val Cope	Martley & Worc West	- Denise Pollock
Kingswinford	- Chris Geary	Pershore	- VACANT
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