



# The Scottish Episcopal Church

# Called By Name

- Reflections from the first  
women priests



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## Preface

This booklet was commissioned for the Celebration marking the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Ordination of Women to the Priesthood in the Scottish Episcopal Church, held in St Ninian's Cathedral, Perth, on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> December 2019.

The College of Bishops invited the Revd Dr Canon Carrie Applegath to plan this Celebration. She agreed, and brought together a small group, Revd Dr Jenny Wright, Dr Carol Marples, and Dr Elaine Cameron for this purpose.

The group wish to thank these 'first women' who graciously entrusted their stories to us. It has been a privilege to work with them. They describe how they lived by faith, walking in hope that one day their call would be heard. Their reflections mark significant milestones in the life of the Scottish Episcopal Church.

Our warm thanks go also to Bishop Richard Holloway and Bishop Anne Dyer for their contributions and encouragement.

The booklet with the stories will be available on the SEC website:

<http://www.scotland.anglican.org/>

*Dr Elaine Cameron*  
*Revd Jeanette Allan*  
Editors



## Dedication

This booklet is dedicated to the memory of the first women priests who have died since their ordination in 1994.

Jane Burchill	Aberdeen & Orkney
Dorothy Firmin	Aberdeen & Orkney
Kathleen Dall	Brechin
Diana Forman	Edinburgh
Mary Pat Lennard	Edinburgh
Frances Maclean	Edinburgh
Elizabeth Malloch	Edinburgh
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Muriel Robertson	St Andrews, Dunkeld & Dunblane
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## Foreword

My memory of December 17, 1994 in St Mary's Cathedral Edinburgh, when I ordained seventeen deacons to the priesthood, fifteen of them women, is one of bitter-sweetness. The years of debate that had preceded that historic day had certainly been bitter, particularly for the many women over the years who had experienced their sense of calling being rejected by the Church they had served faithfully for most of their lives.

The bitterness in the Scottish Episcopal Church had a particular edge to it, because it was focused on the house of bishops. I'm a bit hazy about the exact statistics here, but my memory is clear that the biggest stumbling block in Scotland had been among the bishops. For the legislation to pass, there had to be majorities in the three houses of the Provincial Synod, bishops, other clergy, and laity. It had been clear for a while that the necessary majorities to get it through were there among the clergy and laity, but there was a stubborn resistance to it among some of the Bishops.

But where there's retirement there's hope. That's what happened here. A couple of episcopal elections and the game changed. But it left me with a question: even in an episcopal church, should the house of bishops continue to have the power of veto over matters of such profound importance for the whole Church?

As well as frustration at the bishops, there had been the pain of the women themselves, many of whom had been waiting for decades for this moment. I tried to reflect the complexity of their emotions in my sermon that day. I observed that while it was a day of rejoicing and celebration, it was also one we should not take easily in our stride. For too long women had been wounded by the Church they loved.

I went on: *'So this day, as a male bishop and a company of male priests lay their hands on the patient heads of their sisters to*

*incorporate them into the company of presbyters, must also be seen as a day of healing and penitence for the long years of wounding’.*

Sadly, as one wound was being healed that day, another was being inflicted, this one on those who could not accept the validity of what was happening. It was here that the Scottish Church showed particular courage. Rather than offering opponents of women’s ordination, a Para-Church within the Church where they could kid themselves that nothing had changed, we decided to live with the pain of the decision and let it heal itself over the years. Which is exactly what happened.

In another place not far from us the issue has still never been fully resolved, but in Scotland it is over and done with.

That is why, twenty-five years on, we can celebrate the ordination of women to the priesthood with uncomplicated joy. And in case you haven’t noticed: we also have a woman bishop!

**Rt Revd Richard Holloway**

## **A Calling Fulfilled**

I first felt a call to preaching many years ago and made informal enquiries about Lay Readership. I quickly discovered that only men were eligible for this office. In those days, women didn't read lessons, take the collection, or serve on the Vestry in our congregation. I taught in Sunday School, sang in the choir, and studied as much theology as possible.

Gradually things changed. People were becoming aware that women had unused talents. (Male) Clergy were in short supply, and there was a fresh awareness of the value of lay ministry, not least by our bishop, Ian Begg. When I discovered that women could become Lay Readers I talked to our then Rector, Bob Allsopp. When I spoke diffidently about my sense of calling to Lay Readership, he laughed, 'I thought you were going to say you wanted to be a priest.' He warmly encouraged me to speak to the Bishop, and so eventually I became a Lay Reader (1974), Deacon (1987) and Priest (1994).

These were fruitful and, for the most part, happy years. My husband was, and still is, very supportive; we have two lovely children. I worked as a Lecturer in New Testament in Aberdeen University. I took great joy in my teaching and preaching. I was supported and encouraged by academic colleagues and SEC clergy, by members of our Diocesan Training for Ministry course, by vestry and congregation at St James's, and by friends in the Movement for Whole Ministry (MWM), which served as a wonderful stimulus for women and men working together in harmony. At the same time in MWM we were deeply conscious of the genuine distress felt by those who thought women's ordination contrary to Scripture and God's will.

The first year of my diaconate was difficult. So, I moved from St James's to St John's where I was warmly welcomed as a Deacon. It was not quite such plain sailing when I was priested, as some of the

congregation were not in favour of women priests. Each week we declared in advance who would be celebrating at the Eucharist, so that those who wished, could avoid a woman priest. I was also feeling that the time had come to do something new academically and was delighted to be offered a post at Ripon College Cuddesdon, where they specifically wished to have a woman priest on their teaching staff.

The move to Oxford was a big step and a learning experience. It meant long hours of teaching, daily chapel attendance two or three times, preaching most Sundays, numerous social college activities; I also served as Chaplain. In December 1999 my husband and I retired to Aberdeen and returned to St James's, where I still serve as Assistant Priest.

The Church has changed enormously over these years. Numbers are smaller, services have been modernised, and women play an increasingly active leadership role, culminating in the appointment of our Province's first female Bishop. Pastoral care, especially for the elderly, has become even more important. Female clergy and women lay leaders have played a big part in this care. Women have also showed their talents in other roles once confined to men, e.g. Church administration and theological writing.

Although there are still problems, we have come a long way towards a 'whole' ministry.

***Revd Canon Dr Ruth Edwards***

## **My Suitcases**

I have only three Suitcases: two for travels of different sizes and one for anyone needing another Suitcase. Looking back over my life, Deacon for eight and Priest for 25 years, a Suitcase represents most of my ordained life. To be prepared, as one never knows where God is going to take you next, speaks softly to me. That is how it has been for me.

As a disciple for Christ, following the pathways of many who have gone before is a tremendous privilege. I never doubted this would be part of our/my life from the beginning in 1975: Beirut; then Tripoli, Libya where I received a call to ministry. Then to Scotland in 1980 where my husband had accepted a new job. I became a Lay-Reader, and was then ordained Deacon in Bogota, May 1986.

In Scotland, I served as Deacon first at St Margaret's Gallowgate and then as SEC Chaplain at Aberdeen Royal Infirmary. After 8 years as a deacon, as well as training at Coates Hall, and a short curacy, I was ordained Priest, December 17, 1994 in St Andrew's Cathedral.

There were not many stipendiary posts for women at that time, but I was fortunate to become Rector of St Thomas', Aboyne and St. Kentigern's, Ballater.

Unfortunately, my husband, then working at Doha, Qatar, had such difficult health issues that I had to leave Scotland to be with, and support, him. When he had to return to the USA for health checks, I served in the diocese of SE Florida for five years. Hoping his health was improving, we returned to these islands, and I ministered happily in Co Cork until my beloved husband died.

Grieving deeply, I thought to return to my home diocese of Aberdeen, but that was not to be. Instead I became Priest-in-Charge of an Episcopal Church in Dayton, TN. This dramatically opened my

eyes in many ways to life's tragedies, and how God is present in them. But I felt called to return to my real home, Scotland, in 2013. Although there was not a regular appointment available, being invited to assist in various churches, including the special St John's, made me feel much appreciated. I learned a lot.

It felt like God's hand when, recently, I was called to take pastoral care of St John's which I love, and where I was made very welcome. God works when you let go of the control panel.

I never expected to travel, to be fortunate to know so many peoples and places of the world. God knew I would need these suitcases!

Now I am formally retired, though still Honorary Priest at St John's, I note two joys which women's ordination has brought to the Church. Firstly, the joy of seeing the next generation of women priests move in as if it had always been possible – no years of yearning. Secondly, to be in the Diocese who have the first female Bishop - a tremendous gift from God to all in this Diocese.

Without all those who, over the years, have accompanied me, and encouraged me, I would not be who I am. Being Christ's disciple is a great privilege. My Suitcases at the last shall be empty, but ready to be passed on.

***Revd Catherine (Kate) S. Gibson***

## **My Journey**

I never felt a call to be a priest, and my journey to the Diaconate was quite interesting, doors being opened by persons other than me.

It began when our Rector, Revd Gerald Stranraer-Mull, asked if anyone in St James', Cruden Bay wanted to join the new group training for ministry. He said he was going to stand down if no-one offered!

I asked if I could join, not to train, but to read and learn about the Bible. He spoke to Bishop Fred and they said yes. I think they saw something more in me!

In the second year, we were to go to Edinburgh for interviews leading to ordination. I said 'no' but Gerald persuaded me to go. It was an awful time, but I was surprised to be told that though I wasn't ready, I should finish training and come back. I didn't want to go through that again!

However, one day, three years later, at a service in a sheltered housing community, I felt God saying I was standing in the place of others who would be good lay elders, so I agreed to go back. This time was very different. I knew whatever the outcome, it would be right. The phone call told me I had been accepted for the Diaconate.

When, in 1994, Synod voted to allow women priests, I really had to pray "Is this what you want for me?" One morning, at my studies, I heard a voice saying, "Read Nehemiah". Oh no, I thought, this could be boring. The unfamiliar book hadn't come into any of my studies. The passage was Nehemiah 3:12, which talks about daughters joining fathers. As I read, I became more and more interested. What came out of it for me was that when Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem to see how the building of the wall was progressing, he discovered it hadn't advanced as he had hoped.

He called the men together and asked them to call their wives and children. He gave each family an area to build. That spoke volumes to me. Time is short, God needs all involved in bringing the gospel to unbelievers. At that moment, I knew I was being called to the Priesthood.

I have never regretted that decision and through all the ups and downs till my retirement, I have loved every minute of it.

God loves all people – male and female. Jesus chose ordinary people to be his disciples. We have different ways of interacting with each other; we also have different ways of learning. I learn by doing rather than by reading, though I have done plenty of that! But I am saddened that university degrees now seem to be required for ordination, many of the first women ordained priests in 1994 might not now be accepted.

***Revd Anne James***

## Cilla's Story

*Cilla's husband, John, has helped her compose this story because she was diagnosed with mixed Vascular Dementia and Alzheimer's Disease some five years ago. Although no longer involved in sacramental ministry she is still active in her local church, St Mildred's in Tenterden, Kent.*

I am delighted to write my story.

Perhaps the first significant milestone on my journey to ordination was when I went forward for prayer at the end of a Billy Graham Crusade at Wembley Arena, (sometime in the 50's), and gave my heart to Jesus, only to be reprimanded by my Sunday School teachers. Everyone else had been waiting on the coach to go home and nobody knew where I was!

I drifted away from the church in my teenage years. Later, in Shetland, I helped the Church of Scotland Minister by taking services for him in various Island Communities. I think this sowed the seed for future ministry.

Living in Aberdeenshire, I still had no sense of a call to priesthood. But I vividly remember on a visit to Bishops House on Iona, lying ill in bed when I was called to seek ordination. HE said, "My Child, My Child, Put Your Hand In Mine And Walk With Me The Path Of Suffering, The Path That Leads To The Cross". HE knew! From that day, I was clear where I was being called, and the Bishop agreed.

After training in the Aberdeen Diocese and at St John's College I, sadly, had just over a year of ministry in the Scottish Episcopal Church before we moved back to England, to work as a priest in the Church of England.

The cross is the symbol I would choose for my ministry. There was certainly a cross to bear. At one of my first services in England a lady exclaimed pointedly about me, when I left the vestry, “What Is That?” An African Bishop, when introduced at a social event in my clericals, turned his back. Two servers at a local church refused to take communion from a woman priest. They got a blessing anyway!

I was blessed to work as a hospital chaplain for several years and am sure I was able to empathise with women in the wards in a way that my male colleagues could not, particularly when it was a maternity situation.

As a woman, I was privileged to work closely with the midwives in preparing funerals and bereavement services for parents who had lost a baby or child.

I’m sure that this capacity of empathy and understanding in all women has enabled the Church to move into a much wider and deeper relationship with society. Men and women can do things better together – we open up the church and worship to others in meaningful ways.

***Revd Priscilla McKenzie***

## ***“The Lord Will Guide You Always....”***

It's difficult to explain just how improbable, even impossible, it would have seemed in my younger years that I would ever find myself in ordained ministry. For more than 30 years I was a member of a Christian tradition which had no clergy and in which women were expected to wear a hat and remain silent during services. I saw no reason to change.

But God had other plans. For years HE steered me gently, but unmistakably, onto the path I was to take.

It began shortly after the death of my first husband. In 1972 we had moved to the Shetland Islands, where I still live, but soon afterwards he took ill, and died 6 years later. In such circumstance's life is never easy, and six months on I was still raw with the pain of bereavement, when a friend prayed with me for healing.

That prayer was answered with an experience of the presence of God which changed the course of my life. I felt myself surrounded and protected by the love of God, to an extent that was almost tangible, and found a peace of mind that I hadn't known for years. A year later I joined the local Episcopal Church. Soon, for personal interest, I began a course that was intended for those seeking ordination, although I had no intention of going down that road!

But four years later, I was ordained Deacon! The change of direction happened about half way through my course. I was a dentist by profession, but I was restless and looking for guidance as to what I should do with my life. At the end of a week of focussed prayer I received an unexpected phone call, inviting me to go to a selection conference with a view to ordination. It could not have been a more direct answer to prayer. It led to my ordination as Deacon in 1988 and to the Priesthood in January 1995. Because Shetland is remote (200 miles north of Aberdeen) I was ordained in Lerwick.

Since then I have tried to serve however God has called me: a non-stipendiary Assistant Priest in Shetland; an Officiating Chaplain in the RAF; and on the wider Christian scene at home and, occasionally, away.

Things haven't always been easy. During one particularly difficult period my husband and I were at a loss, but again God intervened. During a Lake District holiday, a fellow guest gave me a slip of paper saying, "The Lord told me to give you this".

On it was written 'Isaiah 58.11' which says "The Lord will guide you always....." Just three weeks later that guidance came when I was asked to join an ecumenical team of clergy working with the churches in our area of Shetland. (Whilst retaining my connection with the Episcopal Church, 25 miles away.)

The last 25 years have been challenging and fulfilling. I've been conscious of the privilege of meeting and sharing with people in so many of life's situations, and I'm constantly reminded of my dependence on the never-failing support and guidance of God. The God whose reality I experienced so dramatically 40 years ago, and whose love and guidance I trust as I look to the future.

***Revd Elizabeth McNab***

## **From Deacon to Priest on Iona**

The symbol of my ministry, whilst in Scotland, has to be The Abbey, on the Island of Iona.

I first went to be Warden of Iona Abbey when I was still a Church of England (C of E) Deacon.

Ordained Deacon in 1988, in Lincoln Cathedral, I served my curacy in Scunthorpe, but after four years I had come to a point where I felt fully trained, though the C of E had no post I could see which would suit me. Being a Member of the Iona Community since 1982, when the post of Warden became vacant in 1992, I was able to apply for it. My fellow members appointed me, and I went with my family to take up this ecumenical post. Bishop George Henderson, then close to retirement, very graciously licensed me as a Deacon in the Diocese of Argyll and The Isles. Although my work as Warden precluded most other commitments, I was privileged as part of the house of clergy in the Diocese to take a share in appointing the new Bishop, Douglas Cameron.

Being in such a responsible and, it could be said, highly visible position of ecumenical leadership, it was challenging that, as a Deacon, I was unable, for the first two and a half years of my Wardenship, to preside at a Eucharist in the Abbey. There were many who felt I should just disobey my orders and the rule of my denomination, but I would not do this. My absence from the Altar was a visceral sign, in a place of such unity, of the Church's brokenness on the issue of the ordination of women.

It was a sign I felt keenly within myself. So, it was a great moment when the Church in Wales, then the Church of England and finally the Scottish Episcopal Church passed the vote for women priests. I was ordained with one other woman in Oban Cathedral on 26<sup>th</sup>

January 1995, the last women to be ordained priest in that first round of ordinations in the Scottish Episcopal Church.

Iona had played an important role in my decision to go forward for training in the first place, back in the early 1980's, and it was on Iona that, seven years after my first ordination, I was able to stand with those I lived among and those we welcomed to our Island Centres as a priest of the Scottish Episcopal Church.

I left Iona in the summer of 1995 to serve as an Incumbent in the Church of England, and over the next 23 years was based in England as a Priest.

However, I took the reins up, one last time, to serve as Warden on Iona in 2012 for three seasons. Bishop Kevin Pearson was happy to license me, and I was able then not only to put my priesthood at the service of so many visitors from all over the world but had the opportunity to take services of Holy Communion at Bishop's House on Iona.

***Revd Joanna Anderson***



## Unexpected Moves

I never expected to be ordained Priest but looking back over my life I can only thank God for the way he has led me.

In 1955, after nurse training in London, I sailed to New Zealand, expecting to work about a year in Nelson Public Hospital. I joined other young Christians. When a missionary from Borneo was speaking, I felt God's call to missionary work. This led to two years at the New Zealand Bible College in Auckland, where I met my husband Roy. The Overseas Missionary Fellowship designated us to work with the Hmong tribe in North Thailand. Two years' intensive language study followed. We were married in Chiangrai and moved into a tribal village.

A year later tragedy struck. We went to our mission hospital where I was to await our baby's birth. Roy returned to prepare our new home in another village. Two Thai men followed him, then robbed and shot him. He was taken to hospital. God had news reach me. I travelled to the Thai hospital. I saw him shortly before he died, aged 26. We had trusted God for everything. Now I thanked him for our year together, and for the gift of a son.

The Lord strengthened me through scripture. When Murray was 6 months old, I felt God calling me to return to the tribal work, and not go home, as folk expected. So, I continued working with the Hmong tribe in another tribal village. Murray attended our mission school.

When he was 10, I used my furlough to bring him to England to attend prep school. But when I returned from furlough, a couple had taken over my previous work in Bangkok, so I didn't know what to do. Then through scripture and people, words came that God wanted me to return home and care for Murray. After 15 years, I returned to

England. I then spent four years as a House Matron at Stowe Public School.

While there I attended a local Church of England parish. Aware of my skills and experience, the Rector and Provincial Church Council offered me employment as a parish worker and rented a house for us. When women were able to be ordained deacon, the rector encouraged me to undertake non-residential training with Oakhill Theological College. I was ordained Deacon in Peterborough Cathedral in 1987.

Another unexpected move came when my father died. My mother, living near Oban, needed care, so I moved to Scotland. I thought that my Christian ministry would end there. But Alan Mclean, then Provost of Oban Cathedral, invited me to be an Honorary Chaplain. When the legislation permitting women to be ordained priest passed in June 1994, Douglas Cameron, Bishop of Argyll and the Isles, ordained me in January 1995, opening up many opportunities to serve God.

After my mother died, I moved to St Alban's diocese in England to be near Moggerhanger Park in Bedfordshire where a Christian charity was restoring a 200-year-old building and where I have now been Chaplain for several years. As a retired priest I often take services in local village churches.

I look back with great thankfulness to God and Bishop Douglas for entrusting this ministry to me which I continue to enjoy.

***Revd Gillian Orpin***

## Through the Door of Priestly Ministry

I arrived in Edinburgh in 1992 with husband and small daughter having served as Parish Deacon at St. Cuthbert's Church, Darlington for five years. Peter was to be librarian for 'The Scotsman' and I became Assistant Curate (self-supporting) at the Church of the Good Shepherd, Murrayfield. I can remember sitting in the gallery, great with child and knitting, when the motion to ordain women as priests went through in 1994. Such rejoicing!

I wasn't actually ordained priest in the December, but I was at the service with a small baby. She was to be baptised in a service with a super-abundance of sacraments, ordination and Holy Communion, on 14<sup>th</sup> February 1995 at The Good Shepherd. I was 'Mum' for the first part and put on robes part-way through to be ordained. We were about to move to Yorkshire and members of the churches where I would be serving came to the service. Many, not having met me, had great fun trying to work out who was going to be their new minister - some had me married to a godfather!

The experience of worship with SEC liturgy and the gift of Common Order by the local Presbyterian Congregation were to be instrumental in shaping future ministry. CO is still my 'go to' book' and has helped many a precentor in need.

In rural Yorkshire as children grew, I added school chaplaincy to my self-supporting part-time parish role. We returned to Darlington for a short while where I did some theological teaching (though I think I learnt more than I imparted) and hospice chaplaincy too.

Then Peter was made redundant and I returned to full-time parish ministry moving to Banbury to the church by Banbury Cross, in the midst of a major building project. The end result was a church which could serve as an arts venue – we could fit a full orchestra on the chancel step/stage – as well as a 'Cathedral for North Oxfordshire'.

Seven years later and I became the first female Residentiary Canon in Birmingham and served as Canon Liturgist (Precentor.) Enormous fun – highlights include seeing new choristers develop into confident singers and come to confirmation, helping refugees, organising sheep, goats and dray horses on the cathedral square for the National Harvest Service with HRH Duchess of Cornwall and learning to sing the litany for ordinations.

After eight years I felt the call to parish ministry again and now serve as Rector of Northfield in, probably, the oldest church in Birmingham with a heating system to match, but not as cold as the wind on Princes Street.

With state retirement age less than five years away (unless it changes again!), I still feel as though I'm only just starting out in ministry and each day is a rediscovery of Jesus' Ascension promise, 'I am with you always.' Thirty-two years of ordained ministry has been both a privilege and a delight and I am very proud to have been ordained priest by Bishop Richard Holloway and served in the SEC.

***Revd Canon Janet Chapman***

## **The Rightness of it All!**

Looking at the photo taken of all the women ordained in Edinburgh December 1994, my thoughts go back to the rightness at last of men and women together. Many women who had waited until near the end of life for this are, alas, not with us for this milestone. That day the rightness of it all in the blessing and love of God was so powerful, yet peaceful too.

How had I come to this point? In the early 1980s a lovely doctor from another denomination said, "Sheila, you should seriously think about ordination." Who me? It seemed ridiculous! But with encouragement from many directions I started training while trying to cope with two late-teenage sons suffering from paranoid schizophrenia.

One disastrous day when elder son refused to return to hospital from a home visit, I finally had to call professional help to take him back. At my wits' end, I'd had enough. How could I also do serious theological study and discussion? So, I announced to my younger son, that I was quitting, and heading for a stiff G&T. "Don't be stupid, Mum! You got through today, and you don't know what God has in mind for you. Here's your coat. If you hurry across the park by the footbridge, you'll still get the bus you just missed, and be in time for your evening training session." God speaks in unexpected ways!

Very sadly, our son died suddenly last year, but I am so thankful I listened to him. Without him I would not have had all the blessings and joys, and tougher times, ordained ministry has brought me. To many countries and peoples, I have been privileged to share the Good News and love of God in Word and Sacrament.

I am so thankful for the ecumenical support and pastoral care I have received from laity and clergy, but especially from those who, unable to accept ordained women, left the SEC; and those who have remained yet still struggle with head versus heart.

Hopefully, time will help, and the balance of ministry be fruitful. None of us gets everything right, but hopefully good enough for God.

We may be called to “fight and not to heed the wounds” from past hurts or hurts yet to come, but our basic human nature needs moments of affirmation to keep going - even “well done, true and faithful servant” occasionally. One such moment happened unexpectedly just a few years ago when a child received communion for the first time. In the silence while administering the chalice this clear little voice rang out throughout the building “Oh! It feels so warm and good with God inside you!”

Now retired from active ministry, I offer a listening ear and prayer, vital to the church too - where would anyone be without both?

On that special day in December 1994, the doctor who first nudged me wrote on a card with an apple tree, the words “Be fruitful in your ministry.” She attached Mother Teresa of Calcutta’s prayer:

*The fruit of silence is prayer,  
The fruit of prayer is faith,  
The fruit of faith is love  
The fruit of love is service  
The fruit of service is peace.*

**Revd Sheila Cox**

## **Twenty-Five Years On 1994 to 2019**

My dual ministry reflects my dual heritage - my dad from Kent; my mum from St Helena Island in the South Atlantic. Feeling called, aged 14, I went to Rochester Cathedral and asked the elderly Deaconess if I could be ordained. "No", she said, "we do not ordain women priests."

In Scotland as a divinity undergraduate in St Andrews, I was encouraged to explore ministry by Bishop Michael Hare Duke. So, ten years later, I found myself in 1985, studying at Coates Hall. I was ordained Deacon in 1987. Two curacies followed, first in the Borders, then at Holy Cross, Edinburgh,

I then became Deacon-with-Charge at St Columba's by the Castle, Edinburgh, though not priested until two and a half years later, December 1994 - exciting and varied times. The second half of my ministry, in inner-city Leicester, brought about by meeting Canon Andrew Wingate, produced a whole new set of challenge in interfaith and multicultural ministry.

I think the single most significant thing I have done was conducting a Vigil for Peace, and then the funeral service for a young African Caribbean Christian man murdered a few streets away from our church, following which four members of one Muslim family were also murdered. I remember the Bishop's Chaplain saying that this service, which was televised, really belonged in the Cathedral. Somehow, we made it happen in our inner-city Victorian church, with the City Mayor, the Bishop, local Imams, and most importantly the family, friends and neighbours of those who had suffered, Christian and Muslim. It was a great privilege and a huge responsibility.

Following an enjoyable period as Rector of Dunfermline and Rosyth, I returned to inner-city Birmingham where my dual heritage enables

bridge building in our multi-ethnic and multi-faith neighbourhoods. I realise now how much my years as a Deacon took their toll. Not presiding at the Eucharist for seven and a half years meant it took time for me to find my spiritual authenticity and authority. At the altar you have to get yourself out of the way so God can work.

All that campaigning! To be a pioneer is to have to deal with people's expectations of what you should be like. Being an ordained *woman* did make a difference – mothers, including single mums, specifically asked if I, as the woman priest, would baptise their child. Although I still feel Scotland is my spiritual home, I could not meet the expectations of my priestly role without the support in Birmingham from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic colleagues.

Bishop Tim Stevens encouraged me to join the C of E Transformations Group, and the Leading Women course, giving skills and confidence and new networks. A similar mentoring and leadership programme specifically tailored for ordained women in the Scottish Episcopal Church could be of great benefit to many.

The path of my ordained ministry has been much tougher and more costly than I imagined. Despite this, it is a great privilege and joy to preside at the altar and do all those things once explicitly forbidden. As two African women colleagues say, "*May God make your path straight before you!*"

***Revd Alison Cozens***

## **“Becoming Part of God’s Making”**

Most of us who were ordained on that momentous December day 25 years ago were already late starters, consequently several are no longer with us for the anniversary, and we miss them. We remember them in the Movement for Whole Ministry as courageous, encouraging women, with whom we met, prayed, cried and laughed for many years. Some like myself had been deacons for eight years before being priested. Now I am old and “wear purple” I am greatly encouraged that it is normal for women to preside at the altar. I am blessed to still minister in small ways.

Ordination has meant so much to me. Over the years words of others seem to have defined who I am and the way to go. When I was first ordained a very old Irish Catholic priest gave me a blessing with the words “Just be yourself” and his affirmation set me on the way to become what God intended for me.

His words have become a touchstone to me. Ordination has given me opportunities to step outside boundaries into unknown territories. As the first Anglican Chaplain at the old Edinburgh Royal Infirmary, I was taken outside the comparative safety of parish ministry into a vulnerable place. I was used to hospitals, having previously been a volunteer nurse. However, it was not so much patients and staff but the priestly fraternity that sometimes seemed a problem. Synod had voted for women to be ordained, but it took time for some priests to accustom themselves to a woman chaplain at their bedsides. An elderly priest commented as he drew his sheet up round him, “What an earth are you doing here, Janet”? Another said emphatically “No, I don’t want communion” but next day asked me for a blessing. The role reversal for some was difficult and we just had to work through it in mutual kindness and gentleness. Later, as a *‘First Woman’* in an unusual and often challenging parish, there were again both supportive and hostile elements: I just had to keep

cool and carry on. In retrospect one does not realise that God is changing you. That is what I value most.

What have women brought to the altar? For me it is more about what the altar has brought to me and about the relationship and wonder that God has brought me to this place. Henri Nouwen's Genesee Diary writes that the Hebrew word for God's Spirit, Ruach, the breath of God, is both masculine and feminine, emphasising the dual nature and purpose of God. Like Henri, we all need to discover that for ourselves!

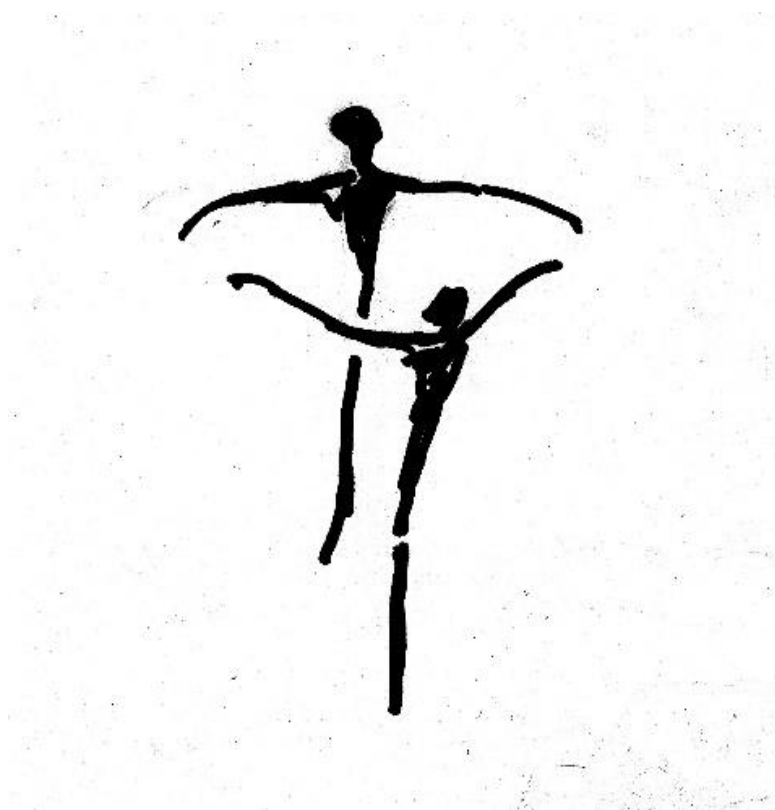
In these years of both men and women at the altar, the Church has become more whole, more resourceful and more receptive to the

needs of all people in these complex and bewildering times.

However, there are still issues!

Comments still surprise me.

Recently, a strangely dressed young man hung around at the end of a Eucharist which I had taken in our Cathedral and said curiously "I've never seen a woman do that before!"



***Revd Janet Dyer***

## Stages on a Journey

In a way, my journey towards ordination has been lifelong. From children's services to youth fellowship and including a time volunteering in Nazareth in my teens, which was a profound experience. The opportunity to visit Biblical sites and see the witness of hospital staff was something I will never forget.

I was a deacon for only two years, so, in some respects, unlike others, that stage of the journey was relatively short.

The sense of call evolved – I can't identify a specific time, though I do remember acknowledging it during an ecumenical week in Iona. But I rejected the first invitation to join the Diocesan Training for Ministry course. I didn't feel I was mature enough! Is one ever? But to everything there is a time...

I was carefully nurtured by successive rectors, being encouraged to take a role in services, reading lessons, leading intercessions. But not to administer the chalice at the Eucharist, as that was a man's job. The Sunday that I first did that, (because there wasn't anyone else around) only one person, an elderly priest, made a comment - 'it was good to see you doing that'. Really affirming. We have come a long way since then, June 1981...

Thus, the congregation gradually became used to seeing women participating and so being a deacon was unchallenging. I held the communion cup and longed to be able to nurture people sacramentally. I was at that time working as a college lecturer so inevitably I did not have time to contribute much at church.

I was saddened at people leaving when I became a priest. Others who were uncertain 'came round' in time, when they saw that what I said and did gave no cause for alarm, I could be trusted. There was a pressure to show that women could potentially contribute in a

leadership role, which, coming from a largely female dominated secular profession, I took as unquestioned. But of course, as a non - stipendiary, I wasn't burdened with day to day bricks and mortar, or finance.

I was a member of the group that considered the potential for women in the episcopate. This included attention to theological, social and psychological matters, and was a thorough process. It took a long time for our recommendation to be put into practice, but at last...

The symbol of my ministry would unquestionably be my house communion set, which has been well used over the years. My previous experience of working in hospitals lends itself to pastoral work and is an integral part of 'me'.

The presence of women gives a rounded view and wider pastoral perspective. It's also in tune with the present-day secular world. Visitors from other denominations often comment on how pleased they are to see women playing a visible part in worship. Now that we take it as unexceptional to see a woman preside, I feel that it is important to remember the long journey that many others had. We should be grateful to them.

**Revd Clephane Hume**

## At Best, Women in Ministry are an Invitation: An Open Door

I've always been a rebel non-conformist, although few outside of close contacts might recognise that in me. It was brought home rather forcibly to me when, meeting with Bishop Richard around my Ordination to the Diaconate in 1986, I listened as he telephoned Revd Kevin Franz to ask whether he'd take me on as his Curate; outlining the need for someone who could handle this strong ego! I count the two years attached to St John's Selkirk and Kevin in particular, as one of the most life-enhancing aspects of my journey. It was during that time when I began to recognise that maybe, just maybe I was called to the Priesthood. I was trusted, encouraged and affirmed in a way that had not happened before or probably since. It was a very precious time.



Jump forward to ordination to the Priesthood: This was a more difficult time as my rural parish attachment was not particularly happy and for most of the next 20 years, as a Non-Stipendiary Minister (NSM) I was largely a gap filler. I passionately dislike the Non-Stipendiary title and role as it is often constituted: To be a 'non' anything invites lack of value of the person and their ministry and I

think may also facilitate the attitude that allows the NSM to be seen a useful 'filler- in'.

In contrast, my ten years as Diocesan Director of Ordinands were a privilege and hugely fulfilling: drawing on my professional skills as well as my Priesthood.

Of course, then I was not primarily a 'non' anything! Maybe as we move forward as humans made in the image of God, we can find a way to value all who serve as priests with equality, those who are 'employed' by the church as well as those who freely give of their time facilitated by their own secular employment. More doors need to be opened.

Currently I am blessed to serve as part of a team, where there are equal numbers of male and female priests, and there seem to be no issue with gender whereas, 25 years ago a woman as priest was at least a cause for comment and on occasions polite, but outright dismay.

Yes, doors have opened, yes women have used the open doors in invitation to others: now maybe some doors need to be opened wider.

***Revd Elizabeth S Jones***

## Swimming Under Water

I feel faintly guilty when I look back on the struggle of the women who had a call to the Presbyterate, some waiting eight years in the Diaconate. Although priesthood hadn't occurred to me, I was very aware of their frustration, pain and anger, but my personal involvement was peripheral. I wanted to support those amazing women, and, perhaps because I wasn't a "runner" in the issue, found that those who were deeply disturbed by the concept felt they could voice their anxieties if I was truly attentive to their journey too. It was important to learn new ways to communicate, as both perspectives couldn't, or wouldn't listen to each other, and yet shared the same goal - the ongoing healthy life of the Church.

The guilt that I feel is a sense that I have been carried in on all the hard work, pain, patience and prayers borne by the women struggling to act on their call, while I didn't recognise a "call" to be frustrated by. I was simply asked by my Bishop "What are you afraid of?" and in replying "I'd be way out of my depth" realised that's precisely the nub of Ordination. Drawn out of self, centre into God's unknown, and growing into the Grace of Orders by learning to swim under water. Ordinary people made extraordinary for God.

Doing 'up front' Churchy things was a nightmare for me, since I prefer to shepherd from the back rather than lead from the front.

However, a pivotal moment for me was at my first celebration of the Mass. At the elevation at the end of the Consecration prayer the Host centred on the rose window above the great west door of the Cathedral. The winter light filtered round the edge making a halo of light round the Host. I was transfixed. Everything seemed to pause, and in that heart stopping moment I dared to think that my ordained ministry would be blessed.

I have not been disappointed. Many people have looked after me and tried to keep me sensible, especially my clergy colleagues and my “non- churched” flock from the streets. The time spent with those who struggled against the whole idea had taught me skills to translate unwelcome or scary incidence involving gender and priesthood into a context I could make sense of, rather than be wounded by.

I can't imagine where 25 years have gone. The major focus of my work has been with people affected by HIV and AIDS. One way to describe it was to develop the skill of strategic lurking: to be in the right place at the right time, and to be fully, truly present. To be attentive, learning ways of understanding that might resource in a situation that has no answers. Simply swimming under water.

It's been a privilege and a joy, and certainly enhances devotional life, since there's only God to hang on to. I think the ordination of women changed the climate in the Church, liberating our male colleagues to be all they can be without fear.

***Revd Canon Jane Millard***

## **My Ministry Journey**

Looking back over the years, the first significant moments of my call to Ministry came in the late 1970's when I attended a day conference on 'Exploring Ministry'. One phrase that day spoke clearly and seemingly directly to me when the speaker said that Ministry could be summed up as follows: 'Find a need and fill it; Find a hurt and heal it'. My whole ministry since then has been based on those words and I have been privileged and humbled to have had God opening the right doors at the right time to help me fulfil them.

The journey began when I started the Diocesan Ministry Course in 1982. This was then followed, in our Diocese, as Deaconess in 1984 (one of the first two) to Ordination as Deacon in 1986, (one of the first three) and then ordination to the Priesthood in 1994 (one of the first 8). In April 1999 I was made a Canon of St Mary's Cathedral in Glasgow, the first female Canon in the Diocese. Throughout this long journey I was very aware of the significance of being among the first and of how the way we conducted ourselves and our ministry would affect those following behind us. That was never clearer than when we signed the clergy register after our ordination to the Diaconate. That was indeed a humbling yet momentous occasion.

Of course, during those years from 1984 to 1986 and then to 1994, the case for women's ordained ministry was being debated fiercely. Although I gave it my support, I never felt the need to fight for the cause, as it were. I was comfortable ministering in the place God had put me and confident that if it were to be it would happen in His due time.

From 1986 my pastoral ministry took me out of the church and into Health Care Chaplaincy with God again opening doors at the right time. I was truly able to fulfil my call to 'Find a need and fill it; Find a hurt and heal it' working first in a General Hospital, but mainly with cancer patients, and then in full time Hospice Chaplaincy for 12

years. Here I felt at the spearhead of ministry, affirming the presence and reconciliation of God to many who had lapsed from their faith or felt abandoned by the Church. It was a time and place with a tangible sense of God's peace and love.

Looking back, it has been an interesting and fulfilling journey and I am delighted with the way the ordained ministry of women has blossomed in all areas of church life, from lay to Bishop.

As women we have a unique God given gift to share Christ's message with others and to complement and add to the ministry of our male colleagues.

***Revd Canon Jeanette Jenkins***

## The Call of Love

At Primary School, I was a faithful attender at our local Church of Scotland Sunday School in Aberfoyle. From this time, through Jesus, I sensed that God loved me. Later the draw of church diminished. Whether this was due to my father's tragic death aged 39 or to being a teenager, it is hard to say. Whichever, God played no obvious part in my life for a number of years.

Starting a nursing career resulted in a challenge to a more adult understanding of my Christian faith. This exciting exploration and discovery of bible study and prayer was linked to the Baptist church. I met my husband around the same time, and we married fairly young in my old Aberfoyle Parish church. This was significant for me but thereafter my church involvement again diminished for a number of years. Training and working as a midwife meant that I had very few weekends.

My husband is the cradle Episcopalian. When I first attended church with him, I found the whole experience distinctly strange and uncomfortable. After we started a family, we attended our local Episcopal Church in Hillington – my husband would not go to another denomination! From the outset we were very committed as a family and quickly became very involved.

I immediately had a sense of the Holy Spirit at work leading us to this particular church at this particular time. My faith sparked and grew anew in numerous ways under the encouragement of our Rector and congregation. At the core was the perfect love of God and the fragile love of human beings in the Church family. I rapidly discovered a passion for prayer early in the morning and grew closer to God hearing the call of love to grow and serve.

In those early days I thought my call to serve was simply to find my role within my own church. I had a profound desire for biblical study

and did not return to paid employment after the children started school, ultimately becoming a Lay Reader. I did not really understand the path I was on. But quickly taking a lot of responsibility within my local church led to Ordination to the Diaconate in 1989, in a self-supporting ministry.

My years as a Deacon equated to an extended curacy, and when Ordination to the Priesthood became possible the timing was right. I had been involved with the Movement for Whole Ministry and felt both honoured and humbled being ordained alongside those who had fought so long and hard for that day.

Ordination to the Priesthood opened a new door. As the children grew, I felt it was time to enter paid employment. Would I return to midwifery or, as my Bishop encouraged, take up further training for full time ministry?

Prior to my retirement three years ago I had the huge privilege of serving as a full time Priest to great congregations for twenty years. I also contributed more widely in appropriate Diocesan roles.

Ordaining women as priests allowed me to proclaim the Gospel of Love and contribute to the life of the Scottish Episcopal Church in ways I would never have done otherwise.

***Revd Canon Shelley Marsh***

## **An Ordination Journey**

My journey to ordination took over thirteen years. Initially my call to ministry was unwelcome, I was much more at home in the hall kitchen than I was at the thought of altar or pulpit. I was doing the Training for Ministry Course because I wanted to know more about the faith I had known in my life for as long as I could remember. We were not far into the course when I began to feel called to something. I had long thought the development of Non-Stipendiary Ministry offered a unique opportunity to women, and had wondered why, in ten years, no women had come forward. Why couldn't they see the opportunity I could? It was a real shock to discover that maybe I was one of the women who should be coming forward.

Bishop Michael Hare Duke booked me into a Selection Conference, and I had two weeks to decide whether I would go. I was furious! Eventually I agreed to go, knowing I was meant to be doing something, hoping it wasn't this. I was recommended for training and this was my point of surrender. In November 1981 Ursula Shone and I were made Deaconesses, doubling the number of Deaconesses in the SEC! A Deaconess could, according to the Canons, 'vote with the laity without prejudice to her order'. I have yet to find anyone who can tell me exactly what that means.

With John Shone as my training Rector I began a busy and exciting time. No quarter was given to my non-stipendiary status. Standards were expected to be as high and professional as for any stipendiary clergy; and I wasn't even a clergy person!

In 1986 the Canon was passed to ordain women Deacons, members of clergy. Even though it made no difference to what we could do, some people found the change hard. When I went to lead Matins at other churches around the diocese some people would walk out of church and totally ignore me. However, in Scotland there was not the militancy about women's ministry which existed south of the

border. Here we gave people the chance to experience it, and it was that experience which changed minds and hearts so that in 1994 the Canon to ordain women priests was passed.

A six-month moratorium was put in place, so people who could not accept Synod's decision could decide what they wanted to do. On 17 December 1994, forty-six women across Scotland were ordained to the Priesthood. That we were all ordained across Scotland at the same time was very important. It was a sea change and we were all part of it; no one of us was 'The First', we were all the first together.

I then discovered that it is one thing to say, "Yes, we believe women should be ordained" quite another to say, "Yes, we'll have a woman Rector". That demands a quite different mindset - it took me over three years to find a congregation that had it!

***Revd Jeanette Allan***

## Joyful Perseverance

My mother carried me through the snow to be baptised on Candlemas 1935 in St Mary's, Dunblane. Sixteen years later, my brother and I were confirmed with others in Christ Church, Edinburgh. Andrew and I married in St Fillan's, Edinburgh where Douglas Cameron was Priest and I was Vestry Secretary.

But work took us south, to make our home in Yateley, Hampshire. Andrew worked in London and I was a chemist in Bracknell. We joined the parish church. Andrew and I jointly led one of the numerous house groups for many years. Our group included disabled people from a sheltered workshop. Two specially stand out.

Mavis moved only in her wheel-chair. But after one healing service, she began to walk, and improved so much that she eventually lived independently and confidently rode her ordinary bicycle on busy roads.

Another was Heather. When she became ill, the House Group prayed for her. She recovered, but was not well enough to work, so could no longer live at the workshop. As her family couldn't care for her, Andrew and I offered her a home with us. After the successful trial month, I had to work my notice, so she went to a special hospital. Very sadly, however, she died on the day my notice ended. Many questions to God!

So, I was unemployed, but soon I stopped applying for jobs. Instead, encouraged by the Vicar, I started visiting the 400 families on the church electoral role. This went well, so he invited me to preach at Evensong. I remember that as I walked to the lectern, one woman stormed out, slamming the door. Everyone else (including some Roman Catholic Nuns) made a point of encouraging me after the service! When an appropriate tutor was found, I studied, and in 1983 was made a Lay Reader, so I took Evensong and preached locally.

After a two-year extension course at Salisbury Theological College, I was ordained Deacon in Yateley by Bishop Michael Manktelow, in the same service as a male Curate was ordained Priest. As the choir sang, I became aware of the prayer rising from the congregation with their love, hope and need. I became a part-time Hospital Chaplain in Alton.

I recall one particularly tragic funeral I was asked to take, as a Deacon, in a neighbouring parish to Yateley. The unmarried mother's black women friends sang supportively as they approached the grave in the rain. The baby's tiny coffin was lowered into the wet grave. Over the following weeks, I visited the grieving mother, and we prayed together. But one day her front door was locked; there was no sign of her. Her body was later discovered in the boot of a car in London.

When Andrew retired, we returned to Scotland and joined St Columba's, Aberdour. I was a member of the West Fife Clergy Team. Soon, my mother (in her 90s) came to live with us. She, Andrew and Hampshire friends witnessed my being ordained Priest in Perth in 1994.

Through freezing or wet weather, others' opposition, and other difficulties, God blesses women's persevering priesthood richly.

***Revd Jean Cook***

## **My Unmapped Road to Ordination**

A cradle Episcopalian, from a young age I had a sense of something absent in our Churches. Why were women only in the pews? Why were there no girls in the choir, no women in the pulpit, none at the altar?

**ASK** At our school Careers Day, I asked if I could choose a career in the church. I was referred to my Bishop. He shook his head, “the church is not ready for women yet”. He arranged for me to meet that iconic social worker Liliias Graham and later Sister Anna from the convent in Aberdeen. After a deeply spiritual, intuitive conversation she said, “We suggest you go and serve God first in the world where his people are”. I became a doctor, wife and mother. The answer was given as I shared the grief of families when babies were still born or deformed; as I worked with young people with life threatening conditions; and in the faces of the sick, the elderly and the dying. God answered through others’ love and caring.

**SEEK** Twenty years later, having survived cancer, I was gratefully alive. I requested to join the Diocesan Group studying Theology but was told my place was to seek God in home, work and church. I did find God: within the ‘New Genetics’, the many moral dilemmas of medicine; the ethics of pre-natal diagnosis; IVF; hospice and terminal care. I was privileged to lead workshops in theological colleges, clergy conferences and university chaplaincies. Daily I continued to feel the call to seek, understand and wonder at this amazing God.

**KNOCK** A new Rector recognised my call and the door opened wide. While still working in medicine I studied within the Diocese. However, when asked by the Bishop to consider ordination to the Diaconate, I did not feel ready! When my Rector and vestry asked me to reconsider this decision, again, I doubted myself. However, at the funeral of one of my teenage patients who had suffered from cystic fibrosis, his mother handed me a letter from him.

It said simply, “Thanks doc for everything. You have been my doctor, my friend and my minister”. I stopped resisting.

After a year at Coates Hall Theological College, there followed a curacy at Holy Trinity, Dunfermline where I was enabled to study Theology at Edinburgh University. I was one of the fortunate women ordained that December 1994. Despite many sad, bitter words and actions amidst the joy, throughout this time there was a real sense of the Holy Spirit at work.

Two stories stand out.

- A terminally ill lady in our local hospital refused to receive the reserved sacrament unless it was consecrated by a male priest. Later, I was humbled when her husband asked if I would anoint her and take the funeral service.
- Joyfully, I felt my ministry was truly accepted, the day one of my 4<sup>th</sup> year High School pupils ran into assembly, screeched to a breathless halt, exclaiming “Christ, it’s Mrs Alleluia” – a name which stuck.

My hope and prayer is that women’s ordained ministry has changed the SEC by building on the past so that men and women together have enriched the church to become more inclusive, ecumenical and compassionate.

***Revd Dr Marion Keston***

## Ordination Journey

Ordained six months before I retired was amazing!

I had felt 'called' to do God's work from a young age. In my teens, I attended a good Anglican boarding school, in England. The Head had been a missionary in China and was keen to make sure her pupils were well prepared for confirmation. So, the teaching was stimulating, and there was plenty of support for questions. Ordination was nowhere on the horizon! I studied theology at St Christopher's College in Blackheath, London, and was then chosen, aged 24, to attend the World Council of Churches Second Assembly in Evanston, Illinois, as a youth delegate. For me, this was a very significant event: the theme was '*Christ – The Hope of the World.*' It was also great fun. Afterwards, time to learn to drive, and tour the USA with other delegates.

Many seeds were sown, but back in England I was initially unclear about where I would go. After a year in Nottingham, an opportunity to work in Wandsworth, Southwark Diocese, emerged, and that became home for nine years. During that time there was various training and group work with visiting presenters. One was a Michael Hare Duke, who asked me to join his team in Nottingham. So, I moved north. Then, when Michael became Bishop of St Andrews in 1970, he invited me to come to the Scottish Episcopal Church as Diocesan Missioner. This house, 24 Barossa Place, Perth, has been my home ever since, almost fifty years!

You asked what a symbol of my ministry might be, for me undoubtedly this house, especially this room, have been, and are, important to me. This is where countless groups of people, and individuals, have studied and prayed. It is where I hope they have found hospitality, and the love of God, however they need it. I hope that it continues to be a place where groups in the Diocese study and pray - may it be so.

My Deaconing in 1986 was very significant, because men and women were deaconed alongside each other, and that raised questions about what that meant. The men anticipated ordination the following year, but where were the women going?

During the 1980s, members of Movement for Whole Ministry grew more confident and articulate, and were strengthened that same year when Richard Holloway, the new Bishop of Edinburgh,



announced his support for women's ordination. Although I had felt 'called' from a young age, I had not before then felt a burning need to be ordained.

My diverse work with study groups, and prayer groups, was fulfilling, and I was

very fortunate to be selected for church committees – even Selection Panels - as a laywoman.

So, my situation was different from that of many other women. I had no yearning to run a parish – I greatly enjoyed what I was doing and had done for many years. Ordination had just not been in my mind at all, until the deaconing. But once it became possible, I had no hesitation – even just a few months before retirement! Having women priests has made a difference to the church – it has become the natural thing to have ordained men and women working together for justice and peace.

***Revd Celia Matthews***

## **Our Mother – being Herself!**

*Marie-Louise is not well enough to write, so two of her children, Jo and Mary, have written the following.*

Marie Louise Moffett - at 94 she is still with us, and still herself in some important ways, but no longer able to remember much.

She worked in the Chaplaincy Team at St Andrews University from 1980 along with some of her very good friends, like John Richardson and Douglas Gifford. She was always very modest about her work and I suspect that we, her family, didn't always realise how much she did for people. Now we quite often meet people who say, "Oh, wonderful, you are Marie Louise's daughter" and then go on to say what she did for them, back then when they were in St Andrews. I (Jo) only realised recently that after she became a Deacon, and then a Priest, she had never used a dog collar.

It had never seemed necessary to her to signal her new role! She used to say that she managed to soften the local opposition to women priests just by being herself, and because they had known her for so long, they found it hard to object to her.

A friend recently said, "*I can remember her talking to her about All Saints, where some didn't approve of women priests, 'But you're all right' they told her*".

Another part of her ministry that was important to her was working with people of other denominations in the Ignatian retreats that were held in St Andrews. That went along with her skill at one-to-one support and spiritual direction.

After her husband, Revd Pat Moffett died, she almost always had students living in the capacious house in Queen's Gardens, that she still lives in.

Many got to know her through the university chaplaincy, and her ability to get the best out of people and enable them to be their best, resulted in many happy souls, who to their surprise finished their essays or exams or PHDs, often in the safety of her attic!

***Jo Moffett-Levy and Mary Moffett***

## **Sky Pilot? (Kiwi Jargon for Priest)**

It seemed to me, growing up in the fifties and sixties, that there were still lots of things forbidden to women, though not necessarily explicitly forbidden. In 1976 I joined the Anglican Church after having spent time working as a midwife in the UK and New Zealand, travelled, gained a pilot's licence, married a lifelong Anglican and settled in rural Cumbria. The Vicar was keen on Bible study and brought energy and insight that made the weekly sessions enjoyable and I was eager to learn. However, this was conservative evangelical Anglicanism and though it satisfied me at the time, there were hints from my husband and from others in the congregation that there were other dimensions to church life and faith.

There was one day when I went into the Cathedral bookshop in Carlisle and found on display a very recent book by one of the English women who had been ordained in the US. I bought it and read it and was more than a bit shocked, but a seed was planted. The assertion of a woman's right to have her vocation to priestly ministry recognised that disturbed my complacency.

My professional life up to that point had been as a midwife and this would become the symbol that helped me discern my own call to ministry in the Church. We moved to Scotland and a different kind of Anglicanism, a different kind of diocese led by Bishop Michael Hare Duke. In this place, pastoral and theological education asked questions that were challenging and exciting. I was ordained into a ministry that I quickly realised drew on the experience of my earlier working life. I was still a midwife albeit of another sort, an enabler of spiritual growth called to facilitate the birth of new developments in church life and nurture for individuals seeking spiritual growth.

It seems to me, having been a Rector here in Scotland but also looking at the wider Anglican Communion, that where women's ordained ministry has taken root there has been more engagement

in ministry and mission of all kinds by members of congregations, confident engagement by both women and men.

Recently in the small Episcopal Church in Ariqueemes in the Diocese of Amazonia I was introduced to the Treasurer and the Vestry Secretary, both women, and they along with male vestry members were working happily and constructively with their ordained Deacon Revd Elineide. They work not just with the congregation but are heavily involved in running the women's refuge, the only church-run safe house in Brazil, part of their missional service to their community.

In my own diocese women have successfully taken on scattered rural charges on the edge of viability, renewing energy and confidence that the Scottish Episcopal Church is a valuable presence in these communities with an open, welcoming and accessible presentation of the Gospel. Practical insights from members of congregations are encouraged. Like the recognition of the need for social interaction among otherwise isolated women with young children in Lochearnhead and action taken to meet that need in the form of gatherings in the local cafe.

***Revd Val Nellist***

## Epilogue

For many, especially women, it is a very moving thing to see and hear a woman presiding over both a church community and a communion table. Communion is, after all, an embodied experience. We receive the body and blood of Christ, we together are the Body of Christ, and we are present in our own bodies – differently gendered as they are. Every voice and gesture is nuanced by who we are, as we bring our whole selves to Christ. Hearing the confession, the Thanksgiving Prayer, and the blessing, spoken by a woman can be hugely affirming. Here, at the Lord's Table, women are truly welcome and fully included. We are as fully included in the body that worships as we are fully included in the body that serves in the name of Christ in the world.

After 25 years we should note that for many, including our children, this is all that they have known. It makes no sense at all that the ordination of women to the priesthood was resisted. A diverse priesthood is the norm for them. How wonderful.

However, a good number of us lived through the time marked by prayer and struggle, and we are forever grateful to those that went before us, especially the women, who persisted - like the widow – to ask for something more. Because of these women we have entered into ministries in which we have thrived, and through which we have received so much more than we have given, such is the grace of God.

We have learnt that the church cannot speak of inclusion and say, 'The Scottish Episcopal Church welcomes you', without looking like it is inclusive. Women priests are a visual sign that people of all genders are children of God. To be such a sign women have to be seen and heard, present in every place. And it is an obvious thing to say, but let's note this anyway, women are really different from each other. The more women priests there are, the more possible it is for each of us to be ourselves, not constrained in any way by being a

representative of all women, worried that one failure will bring a whole gender into disrepute.

Those of us that have made this journey from exclusion to inclusion must learn from it. We must remember how it felt to sense a vocation which could not even be tested. We must remember the experience of anger that we, in our own persons, caused by bringing and embodying change. We must remember how healing it is for the whole church to settle into a new normal. As it was for us, so it will be for those who carry different diversities, for those whose gender and sexuality is fluid for example. We might look at the sign we give and notice that we have some way to go to better include in ordained ministries those of different ethnicities and colour, and those who are differently-abled in body and mind. The journey continues until all of God's children are truly welcome in all ministries in the Church.

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