

New Deacons Share Their Stories

Sophie Eleanor Bridget Boughton

Ilfracombe Saint Philip and Saint James, Combe Martin and Berrynarbor

I have had a meaningful faith all my life. Through personal illness and bereavement in my early adulthood I grew closer to God. Looking back, throughout this time I had a growing sense of a calling to ordination. After university and nannying in Liechtenstein I became a youth worker in Sheffield and then trained at Wycliffe Hall, Oxford, which has proved to be a really formative time. Ben and I got married in September. I am looking forward to getting to know the people of Ilfracombe, Berrynarbor and Combe Martin and enjoying the beautiful Devon coast.

Teressa Jayne Cornish

Axminster, All Saints, Axmouth, Chardstock, Combpyne with Rousdon, Membury and Uplyme

I grew up in Plymouth and came to faith as a child thanks to the influence of my parents and a lively children's ministry. My journey to the Anglican communion and then to ministry has been one of gentle, persistent calling by the Holy Spirit, and I am grateful to all those who have encouraged me along the way. It has been a privilege to study at St. Mellitus SW and I look forward to serving and learning as I step into this new season of ministry.

Amanda Christina Anne Drake

Christow, Ashton, Bridford, Dunchideock, Dunsford and Doddiscombsleigh

I was born in London and grew up in Australia, but my family came from Dunsford and Bridford, Devon going back to 1799 when they moved there from Widecombe. My career has spanned the Arts and international banking but for the last 12+ years I was an adventure travel tour leader and spent time in the Central Asian republics, Iran, all over the Indian sub-continent and Eastern Europe. I was also very involved serving in my Australian and London churches until answering God's call to serve in ordained ministry back in Devon. What joy to return to my ancestral roots!

Elizabeth Katharine Flaherty

Saint Peter and Saint Mary Magdalene Barnstaple

I have spent the last two years training at St Stephen's House, Oxford. Before this I studied Theology at the University of Oxford, as well as spending a year as a parish assistant at St Andrew's Church, Headington, and Keble College, Oxford. Despite so much time spent in Oxford, I am originally from North Devon, and can't wait to return, and to be back close to the sea once again! I am a lover of all things craft, and can commonly be found making lace, as well as being outside: walking, wild-swimming, and visiting new places.

Laura Ford

Brampford Speke, Cadbury, Newton Saint Cyres, Rewe, Stoke Canon, Huxham, Thorverton and Upton Pyne

I have been a Licensed Lay Minister to the parishes of the Netherexe Mission Community for which I am to be a curate for 12 years and I am excited about the opportunity to become even more closely involved in all that goes on in the churches and villages across that Community.

Sharon Marie Hiley

Upton Saint Mary Magdalene (Torquay)

I am a retired GP. I was born and raised in Exeter, attending St. Wilfrid's school and then Exeter school, where I was the first girl. I live in Torquay with my husband, Paul, and our two cats, Apollo and Starbuck. I have run away from God's call on my life too many times. He caught up with me, as He did Jonah, 5 years ago, and I was aware that this was the third time of asking and felt very strongly that if I didn't say yes, He wouldn't ask me again.

Richard James Philip Kelly

Exeter Network Church

I grew up in a Christian family and, at 14 while at Lee Abbey, decided my faith should shape all of life, not just Sundays. Over time I encountered God's love and guidance in many ways, and at 18 I received a clear, (and unexpected!) call into musical ministry. I became a secondary music teacher and also served in worship and other areas alongside my wife, Naomi. As I led more regularly, I sensed a call to ordination and have trained with St Mellitus SW. I look forward to serving in Exeter, greatly excited at what God is doing across Devon.

Amanda Jane Lewry (Mandy)

United Benefice of Heanton, Marwood & West Down

Having trained as a Licensed Lay Minister (LLM), which was completed in 2012, I served in three different church communities, each providing valuable experience and deepening my understanding of my vocational call to priestly ministry.

I trained on the Exeter Ordination Pathway to be a locally deployed priest. As I undertake ministry within the communities that presently support me, I am deeply appreciative of their support and acutely aware of my responsibilities to share the Good News of God's love to those in the villages in which I serve.

Donald Mark Miles

Okehampton, Inwardleigh, Belstone, Sourton, Bridestowe, Bratton Clovelly, Germansweek, Lydford, Hatherleigh, Northlew with Ashbury, Exbourne, Meeth and Jacobstowe

I became a Christian in 1987 after going to a friend's baptism.

My wife and I have enjoyed bringing up our family in a rural local community and are involved in many different ways.

I have worked in agriculture for most of my life and God has increasingly given me a heart to share my faith and encourage and walk with others in their faith journey from this community.

I am excited to have more opportunities to connect and share through church and mission in this area.

Mariska Hope Minter

Plymouth Partnership in Mission BMO

I grew up living in the far and middle East and had little connection to Christianity until I got married in church, followed by being confirmed. I have worked in education and business but increasingly felt a call to ministry – first to lay ministry in a deprived area of Plymouth and now called to ordained ministry. I trained part time through Spiritus College alongside leading a church in Plymouth as a Lay Minister, where I have been able to build links with the local school and community groups. I very much look forward to continuing this work in curacy.

Benjamin Lee Otley (Ben)

Plymouth Saint Peter and the Holy Apostles Benefice

I grew up in Sheffield and first came to faith through my local Scout group, attending church parades that led me into the life of St Mary's, Handsworth. I worshipped there from my teenage years until moving to Plymouth in 2019. I first worked as an outdoor pursuits instructor before moving south to serve in mission development across two Society parishes in Plymouth. I sensed a call to ordained ministry since my teens, and the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham has been important in my faith journey. I trained with St Mellitus SW. I look forward to my curacy in Plymouth.

Deborah Ann Plummer (Debbie)

Malborough, Salcombe and South Huish Parish

I think it is fair to say I have taken the scenic route to this moment. I was brought up in a presbyterian church and then a congregation church. My husband and I moved to Devon shortly after being married at age 20 and I joined the village church which happened to be CofE. I began my journey by shaking in my shoes while reading the lesson nearly 35 years ago. I am blessed to be a wife, mother and grandmother which I adore but somehow, through His grace, I am a child of God.

Sarah June Prime

Totnes with Bridgetown, Berry Pomeroy, Dartington, Marldon, Ashprington, Cornworthy, Stoke Gabriel and Harberton

I trained on the Exeter Ordination Pathway, which has been a deep blessing. I have a masters degree in Biblical Studies, have undertaken doctoral research, and am a fellow of the Higher Education Academy. I was a visiting lecturer in New Testament at St Mary's University, Twickenham for eight years, and have taught on retreats and pilgrimages. I have previously worked at the Center for Action and Contemplation, New Mexico, and also been a charity trustee supporting refugees and parishes in Jordan and Palestine. Relationship with God has been foundational all my life. I feel deep joy and gratitude on my ordination, and look forward to serving as curate.

Jeremy Rawlings

Crediton, Shobrooke, Sandford with Upton Hellions, Cheriton Fitzpaine with Stockleigh English, Woolfardisworthy, Kennerleigh, Washford Pyne, Puddington, Poughill, Morchard

Bishop, Stockleigh Pomeroy, Down Saint Mary, Clannaborough, Lapford, Nymet Rowland, Coldridge, Bow, Colebrooke and Zeal Monachorum

My family would say it has taken 50 years for me to finally recognise my call; they were convinced I would grow up to be a vicar from a very young age with 'his head always being in the bible'. I have worked in Education, as a musical director and as a Barrister. Having finally succumbed to God's call following a nudge from my loving partner Steve, I am now very excited with no small amount of trepidation to have accepted that call to ordained ministry. I am looking forward to serving the people of Crediton and surrounding parishes.

Amanda Jean Sarjeant

Kingsbridge, Dodbrooke and West Alvington

Jesus met me at an early age through Sunday School and the inspirational Crusader Organisation and its dedicated leaders. Their love and guidance nurtured my first steps into discipleship. Since then, God has been shaping me through careers in nursing, education and for the last decade as an L.L.M; all of which has climaxed with a call to ministry and in God's perfect timing, the first Exeter Ordination Pathway. I pray that the skills and gifts God has bestowed in those formative years will come to fullness as a curate to tend, teach and serve the people of Kingsbridge.

Jennifer Clare Steele (Jen)

Newton Tracey, Horwood, Alverdiscott, Huntshaw, Yarnscombe, Tawstock, Atherington, High Bickington, Roborough, Saint Giles in the Wood, and Beaford

God has been part of my life for as long as I can remember but it was at St Michael's in Amersham that I felt as if I had come home. I was privileged to become the Parish worker and came to understand that God loves me as I am and will never leave my side. I am now Focal Minister in St Giles in the Wood and am called to serve Him in this beautiful, rural parish in North Devon – to help shine the light of Christ in this corner of His creation.

Stella Katrina Therese Stephens

St. George & St. Paul Tiverton

Music is an important part of my faith journey. At the age of six a musical director visited my primary school inviting people to join the church choir. Although I sensed a vocation more than twenty years ago, I kept finding excuses as to why I shouldn't pursue it.

Participation in the Alpha course proved formative, deepening my faith and clarifying my calling. I undertook theological training at Ripon College, Cuddesdon. I approach the next steps scarily excited in anticipation of God's guidance and provision. I am really looking forward to being in the communities I am called to serve.

Antonia Emma Elisabeth Tregenza

Crediton, Shobrooke, Sandford with Upton Hellions, Cheriton Fitzpaine with Stockleigh English, Woolfardisworthy, Kennerleigh, Washford Pyne, Puddington, Poughill, Morchard Bishop, Stockleigh Pomeroy, Down Saint Mary, Clannaborough, Lapford, Nymet Rowland, Coldridge, Bow, Colebrooke and Zeal Monachorum

I am a clergy spouse, a clergy child and have been an LLM for nearly four years, having trained at SWMTC (Spiritus). I used to work for Church House Publishing in London before I became a computer geek. I have just completed ordination training on EOP and am delighted that my ministry will be with our small local churches. My heart is in the rural church and my passion is encouraging children to think. I enjoy writing the parish pantomime and sketches for children to perform at special services.

Susan Claire Turner (Sue)

Newton Tracey, Horwood, Alverdiscott, Huntshaw, Yarnscombe, Tawstock, Atherington, High Bickington, Roborough, Saint Giles in the Wood, and Beaford

I became a Christian when I was a teenager and worked in the law for 38 years. In 2022 I did the Foundations Course, followed by 2 years training to be an LLM with Spiritus Theological College (then called SWMTC).

Part-way through, I started to explore a call to the priesthood. I retired early and started the Exeter Ordination Pathway for locally deployed ministers. It has been an amazing journey and I am looking forward to serving in my local community - in the church where I have worshipped for the last 22 years.

Diana Margaret Walters

Ipplepen with Torbryan, Denbury, Broadhempston and Woodland & HMP Channings Wood

I was brought up in a rectory and have a life-long love of liturgy and choral music. My passion is for social justice and peacebuilding. I am currently a voluntary prison chaplain at HMP Channings Wood. I hold a PhD from Newcastle University and worked for several years in Higher Education in the UK and Sweden. I work as a guide at the

Centre for Action and Contemplation, New Mexico, and am engaged in international peace building initiatives with a range of government and NGO agencies.