

Twelve women and men will be ordained Deacon by the Archbishop of York, Stephen Cottrell, in the course of five services in York Minster between Friday 25th and Sunday 27th September 2020.

The twelve, who would have been ordained in July this year but for the restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, have been serving as Licenced Lay Ministers in the parishes within the [Diocese of York](#) in which they will continue to serve as Curates once they have been ordained.

The five services replace the customary single service in the Nave of York Minster, to enable the closest family and friends of the two or three candidates in each service to attend within the current guidelines for social distancing and maximum numbers.

Due to the COVID restrictions only those invited may attend; however, the core of each service will be live-streamed on Facebook at www.facebook.com/DioceseOfYork (no Facebook login required), and still photographs will be freely available afterwards for downloading and publication at www.flickr.com/photos/DioceseofYork/albums.

The Archbishop of York said, "It's an unexpected joy for me to be ordaining twelve Deacons this autumn. These are unusual times and all twelve have been making their mark in their new parishes for over three months as Lay Workers; I give thanks to God for the ministries that are already growing in them and through them, and for the blessing they will be as he sends them out as servants and heralds of the gospel."

The services begin at the following times, with the live stream beginning after approximately twenty minutes:

- **Friday 25 September at at 7.00pm**
Ordination of Will Ellis and Mark Poole
- **Saturday 26 September at at 2.00pm**
Ordination of Kirsty Dennett and Fiona Hill
- **Saturday 26 September at at 7.30pm**
Ordination of Vicky Earll and Alan Leach
- **Sunday 27 September at at 1.30pm**
Ordination of Jane Emson, Phil Grayson and Jane Robson
- **Sunday 27 September at at 6.30pm**
Ordination of Nick Garside, Vanessa Kirby and Richard Townend

Details of the candidates and the parishes in which they will serve appear below.

Note: photographs will be made available as soon as possible after the services at www.flickr.com/photos/dioceseofyork/albums, and may be downloaded and used freely; please credit Diocese of York.

Listen to one of the Archbishop's sermons from the service on Saturday 26 September [here](#):

Introducing the Candidates:

Kirsty Dennett comes from a nursing background, working until a few years ago as a Staff Nurse at York Hospital; she continues to serve there as a Chaplain.

During a time in her life when she felt particularly unworthy and unloved, Kirsty had a profound experience of God through the Holy Spirit.

“The experience showed me how God saw me, how God saw all of us, and how connected we all are to each other; this realisation of God’s unconditional love forever changed me.”

Kirsty began studying with York School of Ministry (YSOM) in 2012, becoming a Reader (a licensed lay minister) in 2016 and attaining a BA theology degree, and gradually internal prompting drew her towards ordination.

She studied for two years with St Hild College, and looks forward to serving as Assistant Curate in her home parish of **Clifton, York**.

“With a heart for pastoral care and social justice, I ask that I am used in the way God wills.”

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Vicky Earll grew up in a Christian family where faith was expressed as something exciting.

After university she planted and led a Pioneer Network Church for 14 years: “Our heart was to build authentic community and be a church that was accessible for people to find God.

“An unexpected call into the Church of England that I couldn’t escape brings me to ordination; I trained at Cranmer Hall, Durham and am grateful for all that I learned, time to reflect and the friends I have made.

“My hope for my future ministry is that it will be authentic and full of love, as I seek to join in with what God is doing. I long for people to encounter our loving God and experience the transformation that his love brings.”

Vicky will serve as Assistant Curate at **St Michael-le-Belfrey, York**.

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Will Ellis came to faith at university, and moved to York to complete an MA in medieval history before working in York Minster as a verger.

While working at York Minster he began to discern a calling to ordained ministry. He worked as a full-time pastoral assistant on an estate in North Shields to explore this calling, and for the last three years has been trained and formed for the ministry at Ridley Hall in Cambridge.

Will enjoyed his time in Cambridge and feels that he grew in the love of Christ and the fellowship of the Spirit in the community of faith at college.

"I am excited to have moved back to Yorkshire to be part of God's mission, serving the people of Whitby, and following in the footsteps of St Hilda and other great northern saints."

He will serve as Assistant Curate in the **Parish of Whitby**.

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Jane Emson came to faith in her late 20s, and worked for 30 years inside and outside the church with vulnerable children, young people and adults, in Social care with drug and alcohol services, rehabilitation centres, young offenders, women's refuges, domestic abuse projects, and prisons, including serving as lay chaplain to a women's prison.

She has never stopped telling people about Jesus: "I have always been very passionate about sharing my faith and that continues today. It saddens me that people do not know the hope that is found in Jesus."

Jane trained and is commissioned as a Church Army evangelist, and with support overcame her dyslexia to gain a BA in Mission and Ministry at the age of 45.

She will continue to serve as a "Multiply Minister" helping to build a new worshipping community **Brambles Farm and Thorntree in Middlesbrough**, and hopes to bring people to a living Faith in Jesus Christ, enabling them become wholehearted followers.

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Nick Garside is a long-serving church organist and choir director, having come to Jesus at the age of 17 after a service at Scargill House in Kettlewell.

A musician and music teacher, Nick was the Head of Music at Selby College until last year, and continues to teach instrumental music at schools in the York area and at York Music Centre.

Married to Jill, with sons Sam, Chris, Eric and Frank and four grandchildren, Nick enjoys cooking, gardening and when he gets some free time likes to paint watercolours.

He has studied as an Ordinand at St Hild College for the last two years, and at York School of Ministry before that.

"I love to see people come to know Jesus and I'm looking forward to meeting and walking alongside people on their journey of faith," he says.

Nick will serve as Assistant Curate in **Rural Ainsty (Bilton in Ainsty; Healaugh; Hessay; Moor Monkton and Wighill)**.

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Phil Grayson came to a personal faith in Christ at age 11. Ordination was not a career he considered until his first year of Sixth Form, when he experienced a renewal of his faith after a period of significant challenge.

He studied for a BA in Theology and Religious Studies at York St John University, before going home to Sheffield to work as a Parish Assistant, and then three years as a Conductor on Sheffield's trams.

Phil returned to York for a Church of England Ministry Experience Scheme year, at the Minster and St Luke's parish church, and was recommended for ordination; he trained at Cranmer Hall, Durham.

Ordination training is certainly demanding, but I have found it to be a time of growth, deep relationships and a lot of fun.

My hope for ministry is that I will be able to help people encounter the love of God and grow to become passionate followers of Jesus.

Phil will serve as Assistant Curate at **Sherburn-in-Elmet with Saxton**.

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Fiona Hill's varied career has included serving others from waitressing to checkouts to museums; she holds a teaching certificate in Lifelong Learning and worked in a university library tagging books.

But the golden thread has been working with people with disabilities in the community, in the college I did my A Levels in, in universities and as a diocesan disability officer.

Her calling started with people stating, 'So you're gonna be a vicar then.'

Eventually I prayed if this was what God wanted, 'God, if you want me to be a priest, you're gonna have to make it obvious, but not scary, cos you know what I'm like.'

Following this prayer came a religious experience it became obvious to Fiona that God wanted her to become a priest and the religious experience wasn't scary either!

She trained for ordination at Cranmer Hall, Durham, and hopes 'To serve God well, to proclaim the Good News faithfully, and to seek the Holy Spirit.'

Fiona will serve as Assistant Curate at **Scarborough, St Columba and St James with Holy Trinity**.

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Vanessa Kirby came to faith at Mission England in 1985 aged 19 and was nurtured as a disciple at St Barnabas Church, Linthorpe, Middlesbrough.

In 1998 she began training with Church Army in Sheffield, and ministered there until 2015.

Back in Middlesbrough she has taken different roles in deprived communities focusing on supporting people to live life in all its fullness.

She trained for ordination at Cranmer Hall, Durham, and enjoyed community life spanning the breadth of the Anglican Church.

Vanessa is married to Jeff with two children, Ben and Alice, and is a Teessider born and bred.

With a heart for Teesside, I am thrilled that my curacy is **St Oswald's and St Chad's in Middlesbrough**

I reflect and hold on to some words from theologian Philip Yancey: "There is nothing we can do to make God love us more, and nothing we can do to make God love us less."

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Alan Leach is a Lecturer and Psychotherapist working in the East Riding of Yorkshire.

He enjoyed training for ordination at St Hild College, gaining a Diploma HE in Theology, Ministry and Mission.

"I found the course a huge learning curve with my formation being both challenging and rewarding in my spiritual growth. I continue to gain from my training a deepened sense of connection with God through ongoing prayer and biblical studies."

He will continue his professional work alongside his role as Assistant Curate at **All Saints, Rudston**.

Alan lives with his wife Jenny and three younger sons, Matthew (12), Samuel (15) and Jake (16), and says that his older children Amy and stepson William are thrilled about his upcoming ordination.

"I am excited to harness my secular gifts in teaching and pastoral support applying them into a faith-centred context and placing Christ at the heart of my ministry."

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Mark Poole committed his life to Jesus Christ at the age of fifteen and shortly afterwards he had a sense of calling to ordained ministry, but tried to ignore it for many years!

He trained to teach in Oxford where he met his wife, Emma.

He taught for 20 years, serving for 12 of those as a Headteacher and Adviser/Inspector for North Yorkshire County Council.

They have two grown-up children and two dogs.

The calling to ordained ministry remained over the years and following more serious discernment, Mark began training at St Hild College in Mirfield.

“It has been a huge privilege to study, and a rich and blessed formational journey over the last three years.

I feel sure that God’s timing has been perfect.”

Mark is excited to serve God and His people as Assistant Curate in the **Benefice of Rural East York (Dunnington, Holtby, Stockton-on-the-Forest and Warthill).**

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Jane Robson committed to follow Jesus in 1981 aged 12.

In her mid 20s she felt called to full-time Christian work: “I said ‘yes’ but God said ‘not yet’.” She continued her pharmacy career, ultimately becoming Clinical Pharmacy Manager at North Tees Hospital.

After a clear call she became a Reader (a licensed lay minister) in 2014 and began to consider ordination.

“After several years of fighting, including two trying to teach God theology (didn't he know women shouldn't be ordained as priests?!) I submitted and acknowledged the call was real.”

Jane trained at Cranmer Hall, Durham; an amazing experience which helped her discern God's voice and find her security in him.

“I long to help others find their vocation, whether in secular employment, or in the church – and to walk beside them as they work it out.”

Jane will serve as Curate in **Great Ayton with Easby and Newton under Roseberry.**

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Richard Townend is from York and came to faith as a teenager in Criccieth, North Wales.

Whilst employed as children’s worker in Middlesbrough in 2005, he received a calling to ordained ministry.

Sadly, at this time, it wasn’t meant to be. Richard’s pastoral nature and heart for children’s work led him to an enjoyable and successful career in primary teaching at Barlby.

Following contact with Archbishop Sentamu in 2017, Richard unexpectedly found himself in a discernment process, and a few months later, began training at Cranmer Hall, Durham.

Richard is married to Emma with two daughters: Belle (11) and Jasmine (9); and a sausage dog called Taffy.

The family are thrilled to be moving to **Bridlington** where Richard will serve as Assistant Curate at **Emmanuel Church**.

âIt has taken fifteen years, so I am eager to share Godâs love as a deacon. Iâm sure it will be worth the wait!

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