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Eleven women and men with varied stories of God's call to serve will be ordained Deacon by the Archbishop of York, Stephen Cottrell, in York Minster on Saturday 25th June in a service beginning at 4.30pm.

The service will be [livestreamed here](#) or via [Homepage | York Minster](#)

Deacons are called to work in the community and assist in church; each candidate will serve as Assistant Curate in a parish within the [Diocese of York](#), the Church of England between the Rivers Humber and Tees and between the A1 and the Yorkshire coast.

The eleven are aged from mid-twenties to mid-sixties, and will continue their training in service alongside an experienced priest; some will be ordained priest themselves in the future.

Archbishop Stephen said, "It's going to be such a joy to ordain this group - they bring so many different experiences and skills but they're all living Christ's story according to the gifts, talents and opportunities they've been given. A Deacon is a herald of the gospel and a servant of those they meet and whose lives they touch, and my prayer is that each one of these candidates will be richly blessed and find ways to share the hope and faith that has brought them to this day."

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**James Congreve-Horn will serve as Assistant Curate at St Michael-le-Belfrey in York.**

His twelve-year journey to ordination began at St Peter's, Brighton, in 2010 when he was healed of his eczema while taking part in an Alpha Course to explore the Christian Faith.

He and Jess married in 2016 and moved to Oxford when James began his training for ordination at Wycliffe Hall in 2019, and their son Moses was born there.

"There have been a lot of ups and downs throughout my journey which has all worked together to shape me into the person (I hope) that God is going to start using here in York.

"Training at Wycliffe has been a time of learning and growing, stretching and sharpening. As we come to York, I'm looking forward to stepping into what God has been calling me to and to where He will take me and how He will use me."

**Stephen Cox will serve as Assistant Curate at Rudston, Boynton, Carnaby, Kilham, Burton Fleming, Fordon, Grindale and Wold Newton.**

Steve was brought up in a Christian home so came to faith at a young age; he says the journey from then on has been one of discovery through life's many ups and downs - and more recently through his training the joy of joining in with other traditions within the Church of England. He has just retired from primary school teaching but his working life has included a variety of office-based and sales work, as well as working with excluded teenagers.

Steve has just completed two years' study for ordination at St Hild College, Mirfield.

"My upbringing was in the south of England before I came up north to train as a teacher. I am looking forward to being part of the Diocese of York, especially in the rural benefice where I will be serving."

**Richard Grant will serve as Assistant Curate in the Benefice of Thirsk (including South Kilvington, Sand Hutton and Carlton Miniott).**

Having grown up in a Christian family, Richard came to his own faith at university in York, and it wasn't long before a friend suggested a potential call to ministry.

"I laughed at the idea then, and settled down to finish my Maths degree and start work in the financial sector."

He grew in his faith in York Community Church and later at St Paul's, Holgate; it was here that Richard realised God was calling him to ordained ministry, and was guided in his first deliberate steps on this path.

"I've spent the last three years training at Cranmer Hall in Durham and have been thoroughly blessed by the diverse community of faith there.

"I'm excited to be joining the team in the Thirsk parishes: I look forward to applying some of what I have learnt in the past few years, and also to learning lots more from those I meet there!"

**Andy Hagon will serve in York as Assistant Curate at York St Thomas with St Maurice**

Having worked for Tesco and in education, Andy says he's not sure how he finds himself on the brink of ordination, "But as long as God knows that's OK!"

He trained for ordination with St Hild College, and has volunteered at two churches in York over the last year.

"I hope that in the future I can really listen to God, and then do what He wants me to do."

**Jonny Guy will serve as Assistant Curate in Drypool, Hull.**

His faith journey has had many unexpected twists, and he says he's as surprised as anyone that God has led him to ordination.

"As a teenager I was in a difficult place, felt a need to pray to Jesus and became a Christian almost overnight, much to the surprise of family, friends and indeed myself.

"I later moved to York to work with Christian Unions and sensed a calling towards ordained ministry."

After years of questioning and discerning and being unable to shake it off, Jonny ended up at Wycliffe Hall, Oxford, for ministry training.

"College has had ups, downs and many changes for me and my family, and I'm coming out the other side feeling (a bit) better prepared for ministry.

"I'm grateful for the support of my wife Suzi, and we're excited to see what God has in store for us and our son Joey as we begin our life in Drypool."

**Alison Hutchinson will serve as Assistant Curate in the Wolds Valley benefice (Weaverthorpe, Helperthorpe, Luttons Ambo, Kirby Grindalythe and Wharram).**

After licensing as a Reader (a lay minister) in 2015 she was given what she describes as "a huge opportunity" by Bishop of Selby Dr John Thomson of being licensed as Focal Minister to the Howardian Benefice. Â

"This has been an honour and I have grown so much as a result but there were frustrations due to Covid lockdowns, working full-time as well as embarking on my own discernment journey towards ordination."Â

She has studied for ordination for the last two years at St Hildâ€™s College, Mirfield as well as continuing to work full-time and minister to the Howardian Benefice.

"I have had huge support from my husband, Andrew, daughter Hannah and my cats who can be great critics when rehearsing sermons.

"Going forward, I hope I will be able to discern what God is doing in order to empower and encourage whichever community I am in, to join in so that we can share the Good News with those who have yet to hear it."

**Michelle (Shelly) Jones will serve as Assistant Curate at St Mary the Virgin, Cottingham (Hull);Â**

She says she's "A mother of two wonderful sons, Mother-in-law to two stunning daughters-in-law, as well as â€œNanna Gingerâ€œ to five beautiful grandchildren and an adorable grand-dog boy, who is Rollo, the golden doodle!"

She now works as school Chaplain at an alternative Academy in Hull, with 30 years' experience in teaching, education and youthwork, as well as being a fitness instructor, professional singer, dancer and musician. She has also worked at sea as a childrenâ€™s entertainer/youth worker on board luxury cruise ships.

Shelly trained in Chaplaincy at St Johnâ€™s Bible College, Nottingham, then in Theology and Ministry for a year at York School of Ministry, followed by two years of Ordination training at St Hild Bible College, Mirfield.

"I am very excited about being ordained and am looking forward very much to returning to my home village of Cottingham to serve at St Maryâ€™s Church. Last Sunday I was asked to take a newly-lit candle down the aisle of the church and out through the open door. This represented not only the spreading of Godâ€™s light and love to all people everywhere, but also it symbolised, for me, my forthcoming ministry as a proclaimer of the good news of Jesus Christ and faithful servant of all the people!"

**Richard Nihill will serve as Assistant Curate in the Bishopthorpe Road Parishes, York (Bishopthorpe with York St Chad and St Clement), as well as remaining a teacher and chaplain, participating in God's continuing work at Archbishop Holgate's Church of England Academy, York.**

He was brought up in a Christian family and attended church through his infancy and teens, continuing at university and into adult life. Richard has worked as an RE teacher for 26 years in two Church of England Schools, also serving for most of that time as the Lay Chaplain of those schools as well.

Throughout the last decade Richard has felt a growing and unavoidable calling to ordained ministry, to which he eventually responded. His training was with St Hild's College at Mirfield; despite the challenges of Zoom learning during the pandemic he loved it.

"I have loved theological study, encountering a variety of Christian traditions, and the friendships formed - a period of real blessing."

"Throughout this time I was open to the Holy Spirit prompting that God may want me to be a parish priest. However I originally believed, and still do at the end of my training, that my calling is to the incarnational role of being an ordained chaplain."

**Jenny Rankin will serve as Assistant Curate at St John's, Newland, Hull.**

She grew up in a Christian family and gave her life to Jesus at a young age; her journey has been one of steady growth in faith over many years. Jenny first sensed that God might be calling her to ordained ministry while she was serving as Youth & Children's Worker at St Paul's, Holgate, in York.

She trained at Cranmer Hall in Durham and says she's been blessed by the support of the community there, especially over the past year as she and husband Sam became parents in November to Kezia.

"We're so looking forward to moving to Hull and can't wait to get stuck in with community life. I'm excited about the missional opportunities the horizon; it feels like an exciting new season in the life of the church, and we feel really privileged that God has called us to join in with what He is doing in that place."

"This year has been one of significant change for our family, and we are so grateful to God for His faithfulness and provision through it all."

**Darius Traves will serve as Assistant Curate at Bridlington Christ Church with Bessingby and Ulrome, and will also work in York St John University Chaplaincy.**

Darius had a faith from a young age although his family didn't believe in a God. At a traumatic time of his life he says that "I needed God and God came to me."

He has been involved in schools ministry and particularly amongst those with additional needs for about five years, and has trained for ordination through St Hild College at Mirfield: "I have absolutely loved it there. I have quite often forgotten that I have a disability."

"I now feel humble that even though I have a lot of challenges on a daily basis God has still called me to ordained ministry. My hope is that I am going to be able to help people tell their stories and walk with them on their journey."

**Dawn Ward will serve as Assistant Curate in the Benefice of Thirsk (including South Kilvington, Sand Hutton and Carlton Miniott).**

She has been a Retail Pharmacist Manager for 41 years, starting in the ex-mining communities of South Yorkshire before moving to North Yorkshire. Â Working with Harm Reduction teams to reduce drug usage has given Dawn insight into lives considerably different from her own, and through providing end of life care she has supported people in extremely vulnerable periods.

Dawn says, "My vocation journey has been a long and winding road, but I feel that God has always pointed the way and placed people strategically at crucial moments to help and support me. Â Although my calling to the priesthood has come later in life, I come with life experiences which I hope will benefit others."

She has completed six years of training through both Leeds and York Schools of Ministry and gained a BA in Theology, Ministry and Mission from Durham University; she is completing a formation year with St Hild College, Mirfield.

"The last seven years have been hard work, but I have been so thankful for the full support of my husband Michael. As I approach ordination I am really excited to see what God has in store for me on the next part of my journey."

10 min read

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