

This year has really flown by for all those involved in training with the All Saints Centre for Mission and Ministry. From the Diocese of Blackburn three of those who have trained with All Saints were ordained Deacon in June and six Readers-in-training are due to be admitted and licenced in October.

One of the Reader cohort who have been part of the lively crowd of nearly thirty different people who have taken part in training on Tuesday nights in Blackburn this year is Janet Parker from Langho. Janet writes below of her experience.

I have to admit that while I acknowledged and was excited about God's call to this ministry I was quite fearful at the thought of studying and writing academic essays since I had done no real study since the early 1970's. The induction day didn't do too much to remove these fears with talk of academic referencing, word counts and plagiarism! However I did come away with the feeling that the staff, tutors and lecturers were there to help and to ensure everyone would be able to do their best and be successful.

Over the year I have attended one session a week in term time at Clayton House (the Diocesan Offices) and studied modules in Worship, Preaching and Introduction to Old Testament. The Old Testament module in particular challenged and changed my understanding of these ancient texts and gave me confidence to preach from the Old Testament.

Alongside these weekly sessions a module in foundations for mission and ministry was delivered over six Reader Days spread over the year. These sessions gave opportunity to meet with people training from other Diocese and share experiences.

One of the highlights of the year was my external placement in a church with a different tradition and in a different setting from my home church. It re-enforced the fact that we all worship and serve the same God, and He works through His people whatever tradition or style of worship. I was encouraged by my placement supervisor who gave me many opportunities to experience different mission events and to take part in different services. She also helped me identify my giftings and that Reader ministry was a real calling. I made many good friends on placement.

The other trainee Readers came from a variety of Anglican Traditions which brought strength and diversity to the course. Over the year we have become good friends, encouraging each other, sharing ideas and helping each other through the difficult times.

I started Reader Training with some fear and trepidation. There have been challenging times throughout the year, but there have been more times of encouragement, joy, success and achievement and the training has given me more confidence to step out into the ministry God is calling me to. I would recommend anyone thinking of Reader Training to explore further and to go for it. God does amazing things through ordinary people!

If any Readers would like to audit modules at the Blackburn Centre on Tuesday nights this year, perhaps to revisit some areas of study and join in with those currently in training, then there are some opportunities to do so. Please contact me directly **by 20th August** if you would like to know more.

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