

## Rosie Strachan

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**From:** Diocese of Blackburn <communicate@blackburn.anglican.org>  
**Sent:** 03 February 2021 10:24  
**To:** Ruth Haldane  
**Subject:** Lay Ministry News February 2021

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*Lay Ministry News is our periodic mailing to Licenced Lay Ministers and Pastoral Assistants as well as to anyone who has chosen to join the Update mailing list, but please forward to anyone else you think might be interested. If you decide this information is not relevant to you, then you can unsubscribe at the bottom of the email.*

## From Ruth Haldane, Warden of Lay Ministry



I wonder if you, like me, have found it hard to know what to say at the beginning of 2021? Normally I would wish people a 'Happy New Year' or 'A Great New Year'? What about 2021? I must admit I have still wished some people a 'Happy New Year' and add that I pray that it would be one of hope fulfilled, despite all that is going on around us.

When we are in challenging times, where do we turn? To ourselves? To our circumstances? Or to God? We have a God who does not change, who is our immovable rock, who never leaves us, never forsakes us. And as we often hear at the end of a service "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." (Romans 15 v 13). How often have we heard the phrase 'we live in hope', which can actually mean we are not sure of our hope. God wants us to do just that, to live in hope, in the hope of our faith and our calling as lay ministers, enabled by the power of the Holy Spirit. And in the hope of His great love for us:

As it says in Romans 8 v 35-39 “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword...no, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loves us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, not any powers, neither height nor depth nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Nothing shall separate us from the love of God, we have that sure and certain hope. Whatever each of us is facing right now, let's be encouraged by the hope we have in God, and the love of God for each one of us.

Thanks to all of you as lay ministers for your faith and love, adaptability, tenacity, and care for others during the Covid19 pandemic. And if you are on the frontline at work, thank you for standing there, for being God's person in your ministry where you are in these times. There are so many challenges for us all – may we live in the love and hope of God.

*Every blessing in your ministry*

Ruth [ruth.haldane@blackburn.anglican.org](mailto:ruth.haldane@blackburn.anglican.org)

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## Diocesan Events for Lay Ministers

You are invited to sign up for the following events:

### **Evening prayer service for Lay Ministers**

Following our first evening prayer service for lay ministers at the end of November, feedback was that this would be welcomed on a termly basis. The next service takes place on **zoom on 10 February 2021**. We are gathering for 'virtual coffee' at 7pm, and the service will start at 7.30. If you would like to attend, please email [rosie.strachan@blackburn.anglican.org](mailto:rosie.strachan@blackburn.anglican.org) and a zoom link will be emailed to you.

### **Pastoral Care – Adapting and Changing in Challenging Times**

One area which has been challenging for us as LLMs and PAs during the pandemic is pastoral care. Many of us have had to adapt and change, using phone, Zoom, WhatsApp, doorstep visits - and helping those in grief following bereavement has been a challenge. Following feedback from the previous session we held at the end of November, you are invited to attend our next session on *Pastoral Care - Adapting and Changing in Challenging Times* on **20th March from 10-12 on zoom**. There will also be the opportunity to talk about challenges and positives over the last 4 months, and to discuss issues together. Please contact [rosie.strachan@blackburn.anglican.org](mailto:rosie.strachan@blackburn.anglican.org) to book your place.

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## Dates for your diaries!

To remind you, the triennial for all LLMs and LLM PTOs is on **11 September 2021 in Blackburn Cathedral**. Many of you have completed all the paperwork required – thank you.

If you have outstanding paperwork, please send it in as soon as possible. We want everyone to be relicensed, however it will not be possible for those who do not complete their safeguarding training and organise their DBS through Bishop's House. Rosie Strachan will be informed when the training and DBS are complete. Everyone needs to complete their ministerial agreement form with their incumbent (or Area Dean if in vacancy) and email it to Rosie Strachan. Licenses must be returned to Clayton House, addressed to Rosie Strachan. The deadline for this has already passed, however, we will accept paperwork which is produced in the next 3 weeks. **Please note: this is very important for your relicensing to go ahead!**

On **18 September 2021** we will be having a great celebration in **Blackburn Cathedral**, the first service to recognise Authorised Lay Ministers (ALMs). All PAs are invited to this service, and they will become Pastoral ALMs. We will also be authorising all those who have recently completed the new ALM course, along with those who have completed the M:Power course. PAs, please put this in your diaries, it's a really important event for you!

*You will understand that both these events are Covid19 dependant – we will keep you updated.*

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## Faith on the frontline during the Covid19 pandemic



I have heard from a lot of Christians how their prayer life has grown and strengthened through the pandemic; how they have been able to spend more time with God. For a lot, if not all, of those on the front line the opposite has probably been true.

I am a GP. Contrary to popular belief general practice has been open throughout. We haven't closed but the way we work has changed. It changed quickly within a few days at the start of the pandemic and changes are still happening but fortunately now it is only once or twice a week, rather than daily. As time has gone on things are busier and expectations higher that everything should be back to how they were BC (Before Coronavirus) which they aren't.

Everyone on the frontline is tired. We have had 10 months of constantly shifting guidance, adapting to work in different ways, wearing PPE, managing government expectations and patients' demands. The vaccine is providing hope but won't, in the short to medium term at least, reduce the need for social distancing and other precautions.

My faith hasn't changed just how I live it out has. With tiredness I have found it difficult to pray; or perhaps a better way of putting it is any sustained time of prayer or reading. So, what has helped. I do pray but this is more likely to be short bursts of prayer probably focused on a particular topic or area. I am following a plan to read the Bible in a year. Of course, I am preparing services which are currently being held over Zoom. The other thing that has been helpful is attending Quiet Days and Retreats held online.

For those of you who are able to pray more effectively, please continue to pray for all healthcare and other frontline workers for strength and rest.

Patricia Wilkinson

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## Online resources for Lay Ministers

As you may be aware, there are many resources available on line for leaders. The CPAS (Church Pastoral Aid Society) offers some excellent free webinars particularly for clergy and lay leaders. Follow the link to their website (below) to access their resources.

<https://www.cpas.org.uk/browse/events>

The Lancaster Health Festival is organised annually by Ian Dewar, the hospital chaplain in

Lancaster. Due to the Covid19 pandemic this years' festival was held entirely online and featured a number of podcasts of which some may be of interest to you. They can be accessed using the link below.

<https://www.thelancasterhealthfestival.org.uk/podcasts/>

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## Authorised Lay Ministry begins!



Having launched our ALM pathway in September 2020, we ran our pilot of the Core Module online in the Autumn term, with eight ALM candidates attending along with two other participants. This was a great opportunity to train our first ALM candidates in the Diocese, as well as to get their feedback on our Core Module, which is a central part of the ALM training pathway. The Core Module focuses on developing a Rule of Life by exploring a range of key practices which are important in the lives of individuals as well as the local church community.

In January we started our first Elective Module along with the Spring Core Module, both of which are at full capacity, which is very encouraging. So far this year, we have approved over 40 ALM candidates for training across six elective streams, including Pastoral Care, Worship Leading, Children's Ministry, Small Group Leadership, Youth Ministry, and Preaching. We are continuing to receive applications, and it is still possible for candidates to apply and complete any of the six elective streams by this Summer, enabling them to be commissioned in September. Applications will close for the Preaching elective on the 5<sup>th</sup> of February, and on the 12<sup>th</sup> of March for all other electives.

For more information please visit our [website](#) or contact Amy White: [amy.white@blackburn.anglican.org](mailto:amy.white@blackburn.anglican.org).

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## Book reviews

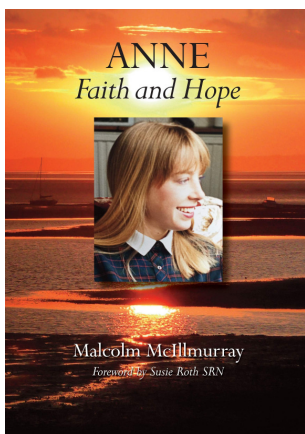
## **A world still Turning: Poems for the days of Corona**

**By Gerald Kelly**

I was recently sent this book of poems for the days of corona and found it a really uplifting, poignant and thought provoking series of poems written by pastor, poet and missionary Gerald Kelly. The collection includes personal reflections on the realities of lockdown alongside some of his previous poems. This is not only a great aid in our personal devotions, we can also use them in corporate worship – live or online. A great resource.



Reviewed by Ruth Haldane



## **Anne, Faith and Hope**

**By Malcolm McIlmurray**

A chance encounter in Lancaster by the author at a service of rededication of a restored stained-glass window, with the sister of a patient who had died 30 years previously from breast cancer, was the inspiration to write this spiritually uplifting book.

Anne died at the tragically young age of 30 and this book describes through her poetry and paintings her journey through life as she faced death, progressing through the stages of grief to acceptance, after an intense moment of spiritual revelation.

This book gives the reader an opportunity to get a sense of how dying might feel, through the experience of a young adult, who saw two friends from her support group die. In despair, after discovering that her own cancer had recurred, she called out to a God who she thought had forgotten her- only to receive an instant and overwhelming sense of calm. From that moment on, Anne faced death free from anger and at peace.

Shortly after Anne died, the author, a consultant medical oncologist, was shown a series of self-portraits that she had painted and which vividly illustrated how she felt about herself and her illness after surgery to remove a breast, chemotherapy and radiotherapy. In the portrait of the moment of revelation, she painted her face bathed in light.

This moving story offers hope to those facing an uncertain future now and inspiration to those carers, friends and family who are sharing that journey with them.

Reviewed by Peter Dyer

## **Books on Apologetics**

At our LLM Meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> November, several colleagues asked for a session on apologetics. These are three books that I have found helpful. *Apologetics* (from Greek ἀπολογία, "speaking in defense") is the discipline of defending faith doctrines through systematic argumentation and discourse. We are often asked questions about Christianity, sometimes out of interest, or confusion, by inquirers or from positions of outright hostility.

Our answers can't be like an academic argument and need to come from the heart, straightforward, but theologically sound.

The full list and reviews can be [found here](#).

Reviewed by Andrea Titterington

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## Assistant Wardens of Lay Ministry

### **Lancaster and Morecambe, Tunstall & Garstang Deaneries -**

Peter Dyer [petervdyer@me.com](mailto:petervdyer@me.com)

### **Blackburn with Darwen & Chorley Deaneries -**

Peter Williams, [homeofhobart@btinternet.com](mailto:homeofhobart@btinternet.com)

### **Whalley, Pendle, Burnley & Accrington Deaneries -**

Mel Clark, [melanie.clark056@gmail.com](mailto:melanie.clark056@gmail.com)

### **Blackpool, Poulton & Kirkham Deaneries -**

Greg Doughty, [greg\\_doughty@sky.com](mailto:greg_doughty@sky.com)

### **Preston & Leyland Deaneries -**

Pam Daunton, [pam.daunton@btinternet.com](mailto:pam.daunton@btinternet.com)

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## We need YOU!

- Have you read a good Christian book recently - can you send us a short review? (150 words).
- Are you involved with Vision 2026 in your church, is there something you can share with all Lay Ministers? (200 words)
- Do you have ideas about further training for Lay Ministers?

Let us know, we would love to hear from you and include your articles in future issues. Email [ruth.haldane@blackburn.anglican.org](mailto:ruth.haldane@blackburn.anglican.org)

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*Email [communicate@blackburn.anglican.org](mailto:communicate@blackburn.anglican.org) with comments and feedback about this e-bulletin and to tell us about what you are doing in your parish to make disciples, grow leaders and be witnesses as part of Vision 2026 Healthy Churches Transforming Communities. Why not forward this e-bulletin to any local contacts you may have? If you received this email from someone else, please [click here](#) to join our mailing list and receive future copies of Lay Ministry News direct to your own inbox. If you decide this information is not relevant to you, then you can unsubscribe at the bottom of the email.*

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