

## **Lay and Ordained Ministry and MDR by Dr Hayley Matthews, Archdeacon of Wrexham**

Archbishop William Temple is famously quoted as saying that ‘the Church is the only organisation that exists for the benefit of its non-members’, reminding us to keep our focus on sharing the gospel with those who are yet to know the love of God. Of course, this comes in many guises, some of which form lay and ordained ministries within the Church itself. It is easy to assume that these ministries ratified *by* the Church are for the benefit *of* the Church whereas we should always be focused beyond our walls; who is it that God is calling us to serve? Which communities are yet to know God’s love and forgiveness for themselves? Who are those that religious exclusion has turned from God? Where are we being called to share the Good News of salvation for all in Jesus Christ our Lord? In thought, and word, and deed?

These questions are why Ministerial Development Reviews are so vitally important to lay and ordained leaders. They give us time and space to reflect, first alone as we complete our MDR form, but then with another outside of our particular church environment, on what we are doing and why. We know that administrative and management tasks can take up a lot of time, but have they simply become displacement activities for missional projects that run the risk of failing? (Never failing = never trying.) Do we need to work smarter and not harder, finding ways to share the burden of such tasks by allowing more people to sign up to the various apps that will make life simpler and reduce the burden of paperwork for many?

I must confess that I was dreading the DAC paperwork that would come my way as an Archdeacon, but our property team and the online portal we use to review and support faculty applications has made life far less complex and much more efficient to administer than the old-style paper-trail that could scupper an application with one missing document filed who knew where. This gives me far more time to spend with clergy and their church committees as we look beyond the day-to-day and into the future of the Church of tomorrow. Who will be worshipping there? What will that look like? How are we going to get there? What is *our* part in that?

God is calling many of us to review our lives as Christians at this time of transition and renewal in the Church, and this is challenging for us all, even those of us who thrive amidst innovation. There are all sorts of questions to be asked: has my giving been reviewed or has it remained static over the past decade? Is God calling me into ministry, and what might that area of ministry be? Intercessions? Strategy (MAL)? Pastoral Care? Organisation? (MAA) Church Leadership? Lay (LLM) or ordained? And if ordained ministry is the call, will that be stipendiary, non-stipendiary, full or part-time? All good questions that can be explored with our Spiritual Directors, Clergy, a trusted LLM, or the Vocations Team.

Once in ministry, however, the journey does not end. Where is God developing us? Challenging us? Leading us? Asking us to lay down an area of ministry? Where have we become jaded, and what might bring the spark back into our ministry? MDR Reviewers are good listeners, with gifts of wisdom, insight, and the ability to ask the right questions. They are not mentors, but coaches, guiding conversation in such a way as to help all those serving God to listen for God’s guiding Spirit with an individual without any agenda but your flourishing in Christian Ministry, for if we are flourishing in Christian Ministry, then the Church is flourishing. Perhaps you might even see yourselves as one of our MDR Reviewers (if so, we will have application and training sessions being advertised in the Spring).

The Church of tomorrow relies entirely upon the Church of today – you and I – being willing to be open to God’s guidance, through rough seas and dead calms; through seasons of change, and tides

high and low. Jesus said to Peter, 'And so I tell you, Peter (the disciple who denied Jesus three times,, remember you are a rock, and on this rock foundation I will build my church, and not even death will ever be able to overcome it.' (Matthew 16:18b) Our certainty is in Jesus, our Rock and our Salvation, whose voice called us into God's kingdom, and whose voice continues to call us into the fullness of His life, and His plan for our lives. God is calling us; God is calling you. The question is, where to?