



COVER STORY: 14-YEAR-OLD LAUREN MCLAVY IS PASSIONATE ABOUT PERFORMING

Issue 09 August - September - October 2015

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ALSO INSIDE:

NEWS &
UPCOMING EVENTS

MAKING A
DIFFERENCE:
VOLUNTEERING AT
THE FOODBANK

IN THE SPOTLIGHT:
MEET JANET
SCOTT-MANGA

INSIDE THIS ISSUE



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Editorial & Highlights	p 2
Cover story: Lauren McLavy	p 3-4
News from the Parish	p 5-6
J.A.M. Zone!	p 7
Making a Difference - Foodbank	p 8
In the Spotlight - Janet Scott-Manga	p 9
Life Events & New Nursery Supervisor	p 10
Upcoming Events	p 11-12
Vicar's Thoughts	P 13
Advertisements	P 14

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HOLIDAY CLUB (AGE 5-11)

Mon 3rd - Fri 7th August 2015
10:00-12:00
at St Aidan's Church & Community Hall

Register now to book your place!
01474 352 500

EDITORIAL



CHURCH HIGHLIGHTS



Sharing food in church

Safari Supper event



Rainham Ladies Choir



DEADLINE FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Please be aware, the deadline for contributions to the next issue of the magazine is 4th October and should include all dates for Nov 2015, Dec 2015 and Jan 2016!



THE RACE OF LIFE

Over the last few months, I have been training hard to take part in the Newham London Open Swim, a one mile swimming competition in London's Royal Victoria Dock.

When one of my church friends asked me if I came first or second, I told her proudly that I came 806th! No, for me, this race wasn't about coming first. It was all about completing it.

I learnt how good it is to push yourself, to work towards a goal and not give up when you have a setback. To believe in yourself, that you are able to do something that seems impossible at first.

This issue of the magazine shows how in our community there are many people of great perseverance, whether it is through their passion for dance or their giving to the community through volunteering.

I hope that their stories will encourage you to keep on running your race:

"Keep your eyes on Jesus, who both began and finished this race we're in. Study how he did it. Because he never lost sight of where he was headed—that exhilarating finish in and with God!" (Hebrews 12)

Mirjam Ngoy - Editor

14-YEAR-OLD LAUREN MCLAVY

“DREAMS A DREAM”: PERFORMING IN THE WEST END!



I meet Lauren at home, where her mum Liz is busy preparing an early dinner. She will soon have to get ready for her singing class in Dartford, which is just one of the many activities the 14-year-old is involved in on a weekly basis. She is chasing a dream, performing at the West End, and to get there she needs to work hard. Or in the words of her mum: “She has to be determined! And of course enjoy what she is doing at the same time!”

We sit down on a comfy sofa in the conservatory and start chatting.

So tell me, who is Lauren?

“I am a 14-year-old girl who enjoys school. I do a lot of things outside of school too, including dancing and singing. I live at home with my dad, mum and two older sisters Heather (21) and Jodie (20).

I do get on with my sisters most of the time! My dad always says that he never ‘wanted’ any sons: he is very happy to have three girls!”

How would your friends describe you?

“I think they would describe me as a kind, up-beat and friendly person.”

What school do you go to and what’s your favourite subject?

“I go to St Georges School and am currently in year nine. What I love most about school are the people. I’ve got lots of friends. My favourite subject is Sports. I picked it as an option for my GCSE and do both theory and practical. In winter I am involved in netball and during summer we do athletics. I think I am best at running.

Who is your best friend?

“Olivia, who is in the same class as me. We are so alike, we just get each other! We have lots of good times together.”

What do you like doing outside school?

“Dancing! I used to do karate, but I knew it wasn’t for me. I did like the movements though, so that’s how I got into dancing. I was nine-years-old. I started with ballet. Now, I also do tap, modern, lyrical and jazz. I practice four times a week.”

“DANCE IS A WAY TO EXPRESS YOURSELF.”

What is so special about dancing?

"Doing a dance that means a lot to you is a really good experience. You might struggle to talk about something, but dance is a way to express yourself."

Your mum is very encouraging of everything you do.

What does your mum mean to you?

"She means a lot to me. She is the most amazing person and puts up with so much. She is always running around for me."

"CHURCH HAS HELPED ME WITH MY SOCIAL SKILLS AND MADE ME MORE CONFIDENT."

Who is your greatest example?

"Barbra Streisand. She is an actress, dancer and singer in films and shows. This is my dream too. I know I will have to work really hard to get here. When I finish my GCSE I am hoping to go to a musical theatre college."

Why do you come to church?

"I have been coming to church my whole life. It is important for me to stay connected to all the people involved. Church has helped me with my social skills and made me more confident. I talk to people that I wouldn't usually talk to. Church also helps me to stay on the right path, to not drift away. I try to remember Christian values when I dance. To respect everyone I work with and to always be grateful."



What do you like about St Aidan's Church?

"I have been going there my whole life, so it is something really close to me. The people at the church mean a lot to me and have helped me through a lot. My parents got married at St Aidan's and I want to get married there too!"

If you could change anything in church, what would it be?

"The time of the service. A 10.30 start would be the ideal time for me! Also, it would be nice to have fun days and do performing in church. This might encourage my friends to come to church too."

What would you like to do when you grow up?

"My backup plan is teaching History in a secondary school. I love finding out about everything that happened in the past and how different it is to nowadays."

But my main goal is to perform in the West End. I would love to play in Les Miserables. My favourite song in this musical is "I dreamed a dream". My favourite sentence is "Now life has killed the dream I dreamed". This is so sad. I am willing to work really hard to make sure this doesn't happen to me!"

By Mirjam Ngoy-Verhage

NEWS FROM THE PARISH

SAFARI SUPPER GETS ST AIDAN'S COMMUNITY ON THE MOVE

On Saturday 4th July people from St Aidan's went on a Safari Supper - sharing a 4-course meal with each course taking place at a different house.

It's always good to be able to meet together in a relaxed way. Having each course at a different house allowed us to digest our food ready for the next offering.

We finished up at the Vicarage for tea and coffee and for some also a liqueur: a very nice way to end a



successful evening.

Thank you for attending and supplying the food! £100.00 was raised for church funds.

CHRISTIAN AID WEEK APPEAL 2015 RAISES OVER £2,300.-

Once again, the folk from St Aidan's (and five from River View Baptist Church) rallied to the call and between us we covered 34 roads for house to house collecting in the parish and raised £1,426.50.

No one particularly enjoys the experience but raising that fantastic amount makes it all worthwhile – yes, even getting soaked on the Thursday evening! The interest in jumble sales seems to be waning. We



had a lovely lot of really good items to sell, but sadly very few people came to buy – consequently we raised only £188.68. We have kept aside several bags of good quality warm clothes to send to Romania with the shoe box appeal at Christmas, and the British Heart Foundation collected the rest of the unsold items for their charity shops, so nothing was wasted.

The coffee and cake morning with the plant and bring & buy sale was very well attended – everyone seemed to enjoy themselves and the weather was good – many sitting in the garden watching the children play. £336.70 was raised as a result.

Rudo, Janet and Wendy also successfully completed the Meopham Sponsored Walk, and between them raised £304.

A further £111.11. was given in donations – making the total raised in our parish to £2,366.99.

So a huge thank you to all who worked so hard, and to those who contributed financially. It is wonderful to know that as a result of our efforts for just one week of the year, many people's lives will be vastly improved.

Mavis Prater

ST AIDAN'S LADIES ENJOY GOODFOOD AND COMPANY

On the 10th of June we all went to the "Rose and Crown" Public House in Shorne for lunch. The meals and the company were both excellent.



FRIDAY COMMUNITY CAFE BACK IN BUSINESS!

Following the interruption of the Westcourt Residents Association's activities, St Aidan's PCC decided to taken on the challenge of running the community cafe. We are now pleased to announce that the Community Cafe is back in business

The Café is available for individuals or groups wishing to meet, eat, drink or simply sit and talk whether it's a book club, social or interest group or any other club that needs a place to get together.

Why not pop along to St Aidan's Community Cafe on a Friday between 9:00-12:00 and sample a variety of delicious homemade cakes served by our lovely team.

We are always looking for additional volunteers so if you can spare a few hours and enjoy a friendly and lively atmosphere, we would love to hear from you.

If you would like to use or reserve space for your group, phone 01474352500 alternatively email info@staidangravesend.org.uk



PREFORM DRAMA GROUP PERFORMS AT FUSION FESTIVAL

Since the beginning of putting the drama classes together we have had a steady response.

At present the Preform drama class is the most popular with between 5 to 10 youngsters each week really becoming engaged with the class. It is a mixture of games, drama exercises and short performance scenes to poetry or text.

The Preform group had their first taste of performance to a major crowd at the Fusion Festival at the promenade on the Fourth of July this year. For some of the youngsters it was there first time on stage and performing live.

They did extremely well for attending rehearsals after an active day at school every Thursday for five weeks and performed greatly on the day. I was very proud to see what they had been learning in the drama classes come to life in their performance of 'There's a Lion in Me'.

The Take Two classes for teenagers have yet to see its first pupil! The Final Act Group for adults has been steady and interest has increased.

For more information about classes contact Gary on: 07981457667

J.A.M. (Jesus & Me) Zone!

Children's Page!

This children's page has been put together by sisters Diana and Nancy Jude:

"Hi, my name is Diana. I am 12 years old. I am going to be 13 in August. I love sports and school sometimes. I go to Northfleet school for girls."

"My name is Nancy Jude and I have lots of pets like chickens and lovebirds. I go to St Aidan's Church and I also go to a primary school called Singlwell."



DIANA NETBALL

"I have been playing netball since the age of ten. I got inspired by my mum as she used to play netball herself. Netball is my passion and my favorite sport. I have played in tournaments and received a medal for coming second place."



WORDSEARCH

We both love animals and have 24 chickens and 15 lovebirds at our home! Find the following words:

- | | |
|------------|----------|
| BUTTERFLY | LOVEBIRD |
| CHICKEN | MEERKAT |
| DOG | PEACOCK |
| FISH | PENGUIN |
| GIRAFFE | RABBIT |
| GUINEA PIG | SWAN |
| LION | TIGER |

NANCY MAKE-UP

"I love make-up. My mum wears make-up and I wear it for parties."

eyeliner



lipstick



eyeshadow



A	G	G	O	D	S	T	I	G	T
E	F	F	A	R	I	G	U	I	P
R	A	B	B	I	T	I	G	C	E
A	J	H	P	B	N	E	Z	K	N
B	U	T	T	E	R	F	L	Y	G
M	N	P	A	V	A	N	O	H	U
B	O	P	F	O	V	C	A	K	I
F	I	S	H	L	K	L	O	W	N
G	L	N	E	K	C	I	H	C	S
T	A	K	R	E	E	M	S	J	K



MAKING A DIFFERENCE

CATHERINE BERRY VOLUNTEERS AT THE FOODBANK

As a church we want to 'share God's love in the community', but what does this mean in practice? Catherine shares how she decided to serve God through volunteering at our local foodbank.

"I began volunteering for the Gravesham Foodbank in August 2014. This came about after a few years of feeling that I wanted to do more to serve God in the wider community. I had worked for a Children's Centre for several years and had experience of children coming to nursery appearing very hungry and when speaking to their parent's had found they were struggling financially to buy basic food supplies."

A little courage

"I felt strongly that sadly there was a real need for the Foodbanks and that I wanted to find out more. It took several months of research, thinking, praying and putting off sending an email until I finally plucked up the courage to make contact with the Gravesham Foodbank."

I arranged to go and visit the Foodbank hub at Gravesend Methodist Church as it is open every Saturday morning and this is the one day I was free to volunteer. I met Eric Davies, the manager of the hub, and he explained about the Trussell Trust charity and how the Foodbank hubs work in Gravesend. I made the decision there and then to complete the volunteer application forms and a month later I began my first Saturday volunteering.

I have been involved in bagging up food, taking food to clients and sorting food donations. Clients are given food supplies for three days if they have a red voucher given to them by different agencies and organisations they come into contact with. If a client has no red voucher they can receive basic emergency supplies."

Looking back at my first year of volunteering

"How have I found that first year? I've met many new and interesting people who volunteer from local churches and also some who do not belong to a church. I've bagged up food for families, single people, the homeless, single parents, old and young."

I've had to think about foods that do not need cooking for those with no cooking facilities, food that can be 'cooked' only using a kettle, bagging up food for someone who has to use walking sticks, making sure that tinned food has only ring pulls as a client has no access to a tin-opener and many other needs."



Regardless of the political issues surrounding the need for Foodbanks, I have seen that for most people the simple act of someone offering them a cup of tea or coffee, a listening ear, and a place to sit and talk about their situation seems to be of great help and support for many. It is not about judging people."

Blessed while being a blessing

"I wanted to do this to feel I was 'giving something back' to my local community but the biggest surprise was that on weeks when I have felt life has seemed particularly difficult, I have found just two hours helping at the Foodbank has helped me put my own problems in perspective."

The simple task of bagging up food for people who really need it has felt like a real service in the community and I've regularly thanked God for all I have got in my own life and that 'the steadfast love of the Lord' truly never ceases. It has helped remind me of how the simplest things in life, food, running water, a roof over my head, somewhere to call home, financial security and the love of family and friends are so important and how for some people these things seem so far away."

Being bold has given me so much in return

"I'm not naturally always the most confident in new situations but sometimes I am amazed at how God gives us the strength (as the songwriter put it), to 'Be Bold, Be strong, for the Lord your God is with you' and I truly feel that taking that step into doing something new has been worth it in more ways than I could have imagined."

Please continue to donate food and other items as listed in the newsheet every week. Your support is very much needed and appreciated. If you want to find out more about volunteering at one of the Gravesham Foodbank hubs you can look at the website www.gravesham.foodbank.org.uk or please come and speak to me."

OUR COMMUNITY

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

MEET JANET SCOTT-MANGA (52)

My name is Janet Hannah Scott-Manga and I am 52 years and 9 months old. Born and raised in the Bo district, Southern province of Sierra Leone, West Africa. I am the 7th child of 20. I class myself as one of the lucky few in the world to be raised in a polygamous home where harmony, respect, love and peace was the doctrine even after the death of our father and most recently our first mother.

When and why did you move to Gravesend?

Having spent twenty years in London, I moved to Gravesend in 2005 because my visiting brothers and sisters were tired of having to spend time in the nearby hotels whenever they visited me. I must admit, although the house was affordable, it took me seven years to settle in Gravesend as everyone I know lives in London. I like the peace and quiet (sometimes) and it further made sense when I started work in Gravesend and most of all when I joined the Christian Aid Charity fundraising Walk.

What do you do in your daily life?

I am a social worker by profession with management responsibility to support and oversee the practice of care management practitioners in Kent. I am also a certified Deprivation of Liberty Best Interest Assessor – which basically means I assess people whose liberty may have been breached or be about to be breached to ensure that any such decision is the least restrictive and in line with the law.

What's your favourite season of the year?

My favourite season in the UK is Autumn, as it is not too cold and not too hot (though I should probably say the same for Summer!!)

What's your favourite day of the week?

Friday of course. At work there is never a dull moment while the end of the day is also very welcome as it is the start of the weekend.

If you could invite anyone for dinner, dead or alive, who would you take?

As I am limited to one, I will take my friend to share whatever experience of fine dining with her.

What do you do when you cannot sleep?

I hardly get a sleepless night (always exhausted), but in the rare times that I do, I read a novel or catch up with work.



Who do you talk to on the phone most often?

My two sisters and my girlfriends in London daily and my mothers twice a week. The rest facebook daily.

What would you change if you were Prime Minister for one day?

Eradicate poverty. I am still hopeful that someday it will happen

If you could create anything, what would it be?

A peace ball that, when dropped in a country experiencing unrest, will bring peace.

Football or Rugby?

Rugby. I like the lads.

Eating in or eating out?

Eating in. I love my cooking and I would rather invite or share.

What inspires you in life and why?

Humility, because I believe in the human race and believe that as human beings we have power to effect good in this life.

What does it mean for you to be a Christian?

Love, kindness, tolerance, sharing and faith.

I love my church because...

Because of its diversity, its drive to bring the community together and it is close by my house.

LIFE EVENTS

BAPTISMS, FUNERALS & WEDDINGS

Baptisms:

03/05/2015 Milao Lusa Ngoy
05/07/2015 Summer Danielle Brignall

Funerals:

11/05/2015 Muriel Iris Mary Hall (93)
15/05/2015 Eileen Elsie Whitelaw (90)
01/06/2015 Mavis Rose Munn (80)

08/06/2015 Carol Ann Watson (70)
10/06/2015 Frederick Thomas William (Bill) Malthouse (86)
13/07/2015 Charlesina Arrows (88)
22/07/2015 Greta Whithorn (81)



WELCOME TO MRS COLETTE WILLIAMS AS THE NEW ST AIDAN'S NURSERY SUPERVISOR

St Aidan's PCC is delighted to announce the appointment of Mrs Williams as the new Supervisor for Saint Aidan's Nursery School, Church Hall.

Mrs Williams brings a vast array of skills and expertise to this role, including seven years of experience as a member of staff in our Nursery School. We are confident that she is the right person to lead us into the next chapter of our service to the community.

As we look forward to a bright future, we also want to look back in gratitude to Ms Morgan who has dutifully carried her responsibility as a Supervisor over the past eight years. She steered our team through two successful Ofsted inspections and has played a key part in improving the standards of our Nursery School. Thankfully, Ms Morgan will remain a member of staff. She has felt, after eight years in the role of Supervisor, that she wanted to spend more time engaging directly with children.



Here are a few introductory words from Mrs Williams:

"I'm Colette Williams; I have worked for St Aidan's Nursery in the Church & Community Hall for seven years now. I am mum to four children, two grown up sons and a younger son and daughter. Previously, I worked as a finance officer, but after having my fourth child I decided to swap spreadsheets for singing nursery rhymes and have never looked back. I retrained initially as a teaching assistant and gained experience working with children as a youth worker at St George's Church. Being a mum myself helps as does my hobby in performing arts. I feel privileged to be part of the children's lives, helping and watching them as they grow and develop and I am looking forward to my new role as supervisor."

UPCOMING EVENTS

ST AIDAN'S EVENTS

AUGUST 2015

MON 03/08/2015 - FRI 06/08/2015, 10:00-12:00

CHILDREN'S HOLIDAY CLUB

"POLAR EXPLORERS"

Fun activities for children aged 5 to 11 inclusive in our Church & Community Hall. See the JAM Zone page for more info (page 7). Booking forms available at the back of church.

SUN 16/08/2015, 17:00

AFTERNOON TEA & SONGS OF PRAISE

Afternoon Tea followed by a Songs of Praise Service at the Christopher Centre – all are welcome. This is a joint venture with the River View Baptist Church, to which other churches have been invited.

SUN 30/08/2015, 18:30

PATRONAL FESTIVAL SERVICE & BUFFET SUPPER

Festivities will start with the official opening of our Community café on Friday 28th August 2015 (9am-12pm) and will conclude with a service on Sunday 30th August. This year, our visiting preacher will be the Revd Chris Dench (distant relative to a certain Dame bearing the same surname), Director of Formation and Ministry for Rochester Diocese. The service will be followed by a buffet supper. No doubt there will be plenty for the eyes and the mouth to feast on.

SEPTEMBER 2015

SAT 19/09/15, 19:00

QUIZ EVENING

Join us for our annual quiz evening in the Church & Community Hall

SUN 20/09/15, 18:30

CHORAL EVENSONG

This is a joint venture with the Riverview Baptist Church. All are welcome!

SUN 27/09/15, 10:00

EAST GRAVESEND CLUSTER JOINT EUCHARIST

This is a service to welcome Karen Seggie as our Cluster curate. The service will be held at Christ Church, Milton. There will be no service at St Aidan's Church. Followed by a shared meal.

OCTOBER 2015

SUN 04/10/2015, 10:30

HARVEST FESTIVAL

All Age Harvest Festival Service with Holy Communion followed by bring & share lunch.

SAT 17/10/2015, 10:00-12:00

BOOT FAIR

A Boot Fair will again be held in the Church & Community Hall. If you would like to book a table please contact Jenny Rawlinson (01474 567300). If you have items we can sell on the church stall please bring them along on Friday 16 October between 18:00-19:00 or at 9.00 on Saturday. Any help with setting up on Friday evening and at the Boot Fair would be very much appreciated.

SAT 24/10/15, 15:00-20:30, with play at 18:30

PLAY: STREETS PAVED WITH GOLD

We are privileged through 2BScene Theatre Company to invite Victor Richards of V Jay Theatre Productions to St Aidans Arts Centre. He will be performing his one man play 'Streets Paved With Gold' as part of the Black History Month Celebration. The day will include stalls, exhibitions and various activities leading up to the performance of the play in the evening. Admission is £6. For more information about events contact Gary on: 07981457667

EVENTS IN GRAVESEND

SAT 12/09/15, All Day

RIDE & STRIDE

The Friends of Kent Churches Sponsored Ride and Stride takes place each year with 740 churches participating. Why don't you get on your bike and raise some needed funds to support churches around Kent? More information will be available on our website and our Facebook page in due course.

SAT 03/10/15, 10:00-14:00

ON YOUR BIKES

Gravesham Street Pastors are looking for at least one person from each church for a charity bike ride at Heron Trail, ME3 7HU. The ride will be 18 miles long with stop breaks. For a registration pack email Gravesham@streetpastors.org.uk

WEEKLY GROUPS AND MEETINGS AT ST AIDAN'S

WEDNESDAYS

AFTER SCHOOL CLUB (INCLUDING DRAMA)

A club for children to learn drama, play games, do crafts, and meet old & new friends. Every Wednesday during term-time at St Aidan's Community Hall, 15:30-17:00 (with 45 minutes of drama). Costs £2.

FRIDAYS

CHURCH CHOIR

If you're interested in singing, why not join our church choir. We rehearse most Fridays in church from 19:45.

FRIDAYS

COMMUNITY CAFE

Nice coffees and cakes, every Friday from 09:00-12:00.

DRAMA CLASSES

Teen and adult drama classes are held on Fridays between 19:00-21:00. Contact Gary Cordice on 079 8145 7667 for more information.

MONTHLY GROUPS AND MEETINGS AT ST AIDAN'S

1ST WEDNESDAY

COFFEE MORNING

Join us at the Powerhouse for coffee and tea right after our Wednesday communion service. There is a cake stall with delicious cakes for sale:
Wed 02/09/15, 10:15 & Wed 07/10/15, 10:15

2ND WEDNESDAY

AIDAN LADIES

Group for ladies, meeting at the Powerhouse to chat, play games, do crafts or listen to stories:
Wed 09/09/15, 14:00 - How to make Pop-up Cards
Wed 14/10/15, 14:00 - Update on "Boxes for Romania"

3RD WEDNESDAY

CRAFT CLUB

A group of us meets at the Powerhouse to do craft activities. Please feel free to join us:
Wed 16/09/15, 14:00 & Wed 21/10/15, 14:00

THURSDAY

WOMEN'S SMALL GROUP

This is a monthly meeting for women at The Vicarage. A place to socialise and meet new friends, support each other as women, pray together and make the Bible relevant to our day to day lives. Please feel free to join us, you are very welcome!

Thu 24/09/15, 20:00-21:30 - on Hannah
Thu 22/10/15, 20:00-21:30 - on Abigail
Thu 26/11/15, 20:00-21:30 - on Gomer

LAST THURSDAY

CAMEO

Are you at a "loose end" on the last Thursday afternoon of the month? If so, why not COME AND MEET OTHERS for a cup of tea, a piece of cake and a chat at our Church & Community Hall. Suggested donation of 50p.

Thu 27/08/15, 14:00-16:00 - at the Vicarage
Thu 24/09/15, 14:00-16:00
Thu 29/10/15, 14:00-16:00

VICAR'S THOUGHTS

For the past two and a half years, Lusa has chaired the Vocations Strategy Group (VSG) of the Church of England (CofE). The VSG is made of a dozen people drawn from around the country whose task is to help the church increase numbers of Minority Ethnic (ME) candidates to ordination. This year, our own diocese of Rochester has seen three ME Anglicans recommended for training; that is one more than the total of the past seven years. The Pilot asked Lusa to share his journey to ordained ministry and tell us why he thinks it is important to have more ME vocations.



As WWI was claiming thousands of lives around the world, a band of young British men found themselves engaged in a rather different kind of mission in Katanga, the southern province of the then Belgian Congo. In 1915, a small party embarked on a journey from Liverpool to the heart of the African continent in order to evangelise Congolese subjects of the king of Belgium. Out of the many converts, a young woman Ngalula Tshala, my great-grandmother.

I suspect that none of the people involved then ever imagined that, a hundred years on, one of Ngalula's descendants would be serving as a priest in the Church of England.

I grew up in a Christian family and was exposed to church and faith for as long as I can remember. From my mid teenage years I had a sense of wanting to spend the rest of my life 'doing something' for God; with little idea of what that something should look like.

Somehow, I found myself as a theology student in Brussels. Once I'd completed my Masters, I taught RE for a year before being sent to work with the French Church that had been worshipping in the crypt of Canterbury Cathedral since the 16th century. It seemed to me that the 'something' I had been looking for was slowly taking shape.

Living and working in the grounds of Canterbury Cathedral soon gave me a insight in Anglicanism in general, and the Church of England in particular. When the time came for me to explore the way forward in life, it had become evident that my vision of the church had been influenced by my exposure to Anglicanism. Conversations with trusted friends persuaded me to explore whether God might be calling me to serve him in the Church of England. Within a year or so, I was meeting with a Candidates

Panel and was recommended for ministry training. I trained at Cranmer Hall, Durham and was ordained in 2008 in Canterbury Cathedral.

I soon found myself involved in many initiatives to encourage vocations nationally. One thing that became evident to me was the lack of ME representation at all levels of our church structures. Statistics were even more shocking when it came to clergy and senior staff. When the invitation to join the VSG came, I said yes without hesitation.

A friend recently asked me why is it important for the CofE to have more ME people represented in its structures? The obvious answer would be to argue that diversity is a Gospel imperative. Therefore, our church needs to reflect that at all levels of its structure. Besides, recent trends in population growth suggest that we are living in an increasingly diverse society. Inevitably, that will be reflected in the lives of our parishes if we do our job correctly.

Then I think back to those young British men who, a century ago, endeavoured to share the gospel with my people. My great-grandmother became a Christian and raised three sons who all became ministers. They went on to have children who answered the call to Christian ministry, including my own father.

I wonder, what would have my journey of faith looked like if there had not been space for my ancestors to explore God's stirring in their lives? What would have been of my own vocation, if they had not been encouraged to explore theirs? It is vital that we encourage all of God's people to consider whether God is calling them to a special ministry. The opportunities we create for people today will inevitably shape our church tomorrow. Finally, the church cannot reflect society if society is not reflected in the church.

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OUR DEEPEST FEAR

Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate.
Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure.
It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us.
We ask ourselves, Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, and fabulous?
Actually, who are you not to be?

You are a child of God.

Your playing small does not serve the world.
There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people will not feel insecure around you.
We are all meant to shine, as children do.

We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us.
It is not just in some of us; it is in everyone and as we let our own light shine,
we unconsciously give others permission to do the same.
As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.

by Marianne Williamson
from A Return To Love: Reflections on the Principles of A Course in Miracles



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5th Sunday	9.30	Communion Service with Prayer for Healing & Sunday School
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