

00:00:00:00 - 00:00:11:02

Jeanette

So welcome. I've travelled here to, the sunny environs of Heath Town to, have a chat with Richard Merrick, who is the, rector.

00:00:11:10 - 00:00:33:08

Vicar here at, Heath town. And, we're going to be chatting about vocations and how we might, as a diocese and as, well as the whole diocese, how we might think about vocations and how we as the central sector staff might help you think about raising vocations in your locality. So, raising up vocations in the local parish church.

00:01:18:19 - 00:01:27:00

So, it's really good to, have this time with you, Richard, thank you for, for, agreeing to chat with me. It's lovely to see you.

00:01:27:02 - 00:01:30:04

Richard

You're welcome, Jeanette, and welcome to Holy Trinity Heath Town .

00:01:30:04 - 00:01:54:16

Jeanette

Thank you. Thank you. I think it's my first time here. So it's lovely to, to be. And we're going to chat a little bit, Richard, about vocations. And as I've already said, about raising vocations, in the parish, context, I'm sure you're aware and perhaps a lot of our viewers will be aware that, one of the parts of the diocesan strategy is to raise the vocational culture in the diocese.

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And, I'm very aware that obviously, over the last few years, our attention in parishes has been perhaps to keep going and particularly in light of Covid and all the challenges we've had over the over recent years. But one of the things I wanted to chat about is, is how you, raise vocations in your, in work here at Holy Trinity.

00:02:18:10 - 00:02:36:24

I know - that, you're always sending people to us for, training people, exploring what they want to do in the church and for their local communities. So I'm here to get some good tips from you, as that's. Okay.

00:02:37:03 - 00:03:01:07

Richard

Okay. Well, I think first of all, it's it's it would be right of me to to acknowledge the work my predecessors have done. There is a culture here at Holy Trinity of every member ministry. The priesthood of all believers is part of the solid theology of of how we understand our place within the body of Christ here, in, in church.

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But, it comes about as a consequence of, Reverend Alister Palmer, who was vicar here in the 1990s and turning everything on its head and changing the culture of the church. So really, I've sort of inherited that culture. And so I've built on on his legacy and the legacy of Stephen French and David Vestergaard. And so when I was appointed here ten years ago, there was already a culture of a vocational ministry within within the church.

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So rather than taking all of the credit, I used to recognise the fact that I'm building on, on the shoulders of others.

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Jeanette

Oh, that's that's good to hear. So I think from what you're saying, then it can be a kind of long process as well possibly, that actually it's about culture change. That's it's about I mean, I'd be really interested to know kind of how how we might shift that culture, perhaps from, I don't know, a sort of maintenance mode.

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~~Of as I said, I think we've come out of Covid with there's been a lot of just heads down. We've got to keep things going. I think what we experience in the diocese as well, often is that we, you know, if you if you're short you're short of people in churches to do the many myriad of jobs that have got to be done.~~

00:04:20:19 - 00:04:27:23

So actually, why might I want to, to, to train someone or raise up a vocation that means that somebody might leave us.

00:04:28:00 - 00:04:38:02

Richard

I think the first thing to acknowledge is the fact that when we're dealing with people's vocations, it's not about being able to fill the rota.

00:04:38:04 - 00:04:39:12

Jeanette

Right.

00:04:39:14 - 00:05:00:18

Richard

If I'm going to speak from my own experience, round about the same time that the culture was changing here, the culture was changing in my sending church, the church that I came to faith in. And, that was a process that began with, with, with the, the, the incumbent at the time and the PCC asking the questions.

00:05:00:18 - 00:05:24:21

Well, what is it we need the vicar to do? And what is it that we can do? And, and that developed a process through which we actually called people out from within the congregation of which I was one. And that eventually led to me training initially as a Reader. And then, being ordained some 13 years ago

00:05:25:02 - 00:05:27:19

~~yeah. So Petertide in 2011.~~

00:05:27:24 - 00:05:45:23

Jeanette

~~Yeah. And of course, when we talk about vocation, I mean, we're not just talking about vocations to ordained ministry, are we? I mean, that's I think often people might think we talk vocation, and we must mean we need more priests. We we want to raise that, that kind of vocation. But as you've said before, it's about every member ministry.~~

~~00:05:46:00 - 00:05:58:22~~

~~Yeah. What people are you know, not everybody is called to wear one of these things. So, Yeah. So how how might you describe vocation then in its broadest sense.~~

00:05:58:22 - 00:06:18:04

Richard

The diocesan strategy, of discipleship, vocation and evangelism. I think all three of those are linked. So it's important that we we grow disciples so in the Great Commission, of course, Jesus said, you know, make disciples and baptise them. And we sort of have turned that on its head to some degree.

00:06:18:04 - 00:06:39:20

You know, we should have look to baptise people before we disciple them. So I think discipleship is is vital to being able to raise people, for vocational ministry. O ur ministry team here is is made up of a whole variety of people, many of whom have been trained, and often

through the diocesan courses, but not to get a piece of paper from the bishop, and that is fulfilling their vocational core and fulfilling that their role as disciple within the the church, as a follower of Christ.

00:07:04:07 - 00:07:30:20

Jeanette

And I know that sounds great. It sounds great. I mean, I think it's I wonder if there's sometimes this, you know, we come across people don't mean to say I only do the or, I only, you know, I only make the coffee or I only do the accounts or whatever it might be. But I mean, I think that all those things, in a sense are vocations, people are called to do what we might think, the probably less, less exciting roles the church wardens, the treasurers, the.

00:07:30:20 - 00:07:31:21

Richard

Absolutely.

00:07:31:21 - 00:07:43:15

Jeanette

...the safeguarding officer. And what what a role that is. So, and I think we're trying, obviously, in the diocese to support people through training them and making sure that everybody's able to do, do what they're called to do.

00:07:43:16 - 00:07:44:06

Richard

Yeah.

00:07:44:08 - 00:07:45:20

Jeanette

In the best way that they can.

00:07:45:20 - 00:08:12:15

Richard

So within the local culture, and it's not only true of Heath Town, in a lot of inner city, communities. And it's not just true of the Black Country. You I know this is true of the Potteries. There is a sense of that legacy of the of the sort of white collar/blue collar Yeah. us and them, which is which is ingrained in people's thinking.

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And, you know, that that sense of often people. 'Well, I'm no good at that'. 'I, I'm, I that's not for me. I couldn't do that'. And so I think there is a sense of it's incumbent upon us as leaders

in the church to overcome that and to encourage people and to enable them and to equip them. I certainly come from a working class background and, you know, in the early days, I had a culture of, no, that's not for me.

00:08:39:04 - 00:08:55:04

I can't do that. And it was only through the encouragement of members of the church that showed me that actually, yes, you can. I think I was in my early 50s when I got my degree. You know, having been told numerous times as an errant schoolboy, you you'll amount to nothing.

00:08:55:06 - 00:09:15:12

Jeanette

Yeah. And how I mean, about that encouragement. So how do you how do you spot something in. So you're looking out, say, on a Sunday morning or whenever it is. And you see, you know, you've got your congregante, congregation members or even people who are coming into things that you might be running in the week who are not here on a Sunday morning.

00:09:15:12 - 00:09:22:06

Yeah. How do you how do you spot it? And then how do you go about kind of prodding or prompting?

00:09:22:06 - 00:09:46:20

Richard

Well, before we spot what part of a prayer strategy or one of the aspects of our prayer strategy here is calling out the next generation of leaders. So we've been praying into that. Yeah. And we recently, appointed at the APCM a young man in his mid 20s who graduated, and come back to the parish after university as a qualified accountant.

00:09:46:22 - 00:09:47:24

Jeanette

Right.

00:09:48:01 - 00:10:14:08

Richard

~~And so, he has recently taken on that.~~ He'd been he'd been understudy in the treasurer and they switched roles. And it's just about recognising people's gifts and pointing them out to them. That's part of the problem in that, you know, we don't build one another up often. Yeah. And it's about just sort of saying to, to, to people, well, you're really good at that.

00:10:14:10 - 00:10:15:12

Jeanette

Yeah. Oh am I?

00:10:15:14 - 00:10:35:18

Richard

Yes you are. And encouraging them in that. And it's not just me as a, as the vicar here, it's other members of the church. So what have you thought about so and so for, for doing such and such thing. And that was how one of our church wardens was, was appointed recently, you know, let's let's give him a go.

00:10:35:18 - 00:10:46:21

Let's see if they're willing to do it. So it's it's a, it's, it's, it's part of the every member ministry culture. Yeah. It's giving people permission to speak to voice and to offer their opinions. Yeah.

00:10:46:21 - 00:11:09:24

Jeanette

that's that's really interesting. I think, you'll be aware that Clare, lead development and officer in the diocese, she has this wonderful phrase that talks about nudge notice and oh, sorry, notice, nudge, nurture, notice, nudge and nurture, which is about noticing what people are good at, not, nudging them, giving them that little prompt and then nurturing them.

00:11:10:01 - 00:11:27:12

And I wonder if there's something I don't know whether you've come across this and whether you've experienced it, but I wonder if people when they're thinking about vocation, they often think God is going to call them to do something that they're going to find really difficult or, that they're not, that they're going to have to work hard at.

00:11:27:14 - 00:11:37:17

I don't know whether you've seen that. I often think, well, God's already given us the gifts, and it's just about us growing them. And, you know, being trained in or learning how to use them in God's service.

00:11:37:22 - 00:12:01:16

Richard

I can I can speak from personal experience of that, because that was exactly my attitude in, in the early days. You know, oh, I can't do that. No, that's not that's so for me, I have and really, I don't think I could cope with all of that. And actually, you rightly say God has already given each and every one of us the gifts I preached on that year on a number of occasions, in fact, it'll be part and parcel of the sermon on Sunday morning, about how we are each individually gifted and there are a variety of gifts. It isn't just about standing up front or leading worship or

preaching. There's a whole variety of gifts that God equips us for. And when God equips us and calls us, he sustains us in that.

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And we just need to encourage one another in that that God will not call us to something that we are not capable of doing. And when he calls us to something, he will equip us to do that. So it's enabling people to overcome that fear and that trepidation. And then I love that. ~~Was it. What was it?~~

00:12:40:11 - 00:13:07:10

Notice nudging nurture? Yeah. It's noticing people's gifts and abilities, nudging them and encouraging them and then encouraging them in a way that helps them and nurtures them. To, to fulfil that role. It's not about calling somebody to do a job and then leaving them to get on with it without any sense of support. You know, that's that is support and encouragement to ongoing support and encouragement is vital -.

00:13:07:10 - 00:13:30:09

Jeanette

~~That sounds really good. And and I mean, in terms of thinking about how do we how do we you talked a little bit about discipleship. And, you know, discipleship comes first, but I just wonder if there's something around~~ how do we distinguish between Christian vocation and somebody volunteering? Does that make sense as a question?

00:13:30:11 - 00:13:58:17

Richard

Yeah. The culture of volunteering has shifted, and I think it shifted in our society. And it's certainly certainly become more obvious post Covid, ~~if post-Covid is the right term to use. But erm the~~ I can recall a few years ago we had we had to fulfil an insurance document for, for our church insurers and they wanted to know how many volunteers we had at the time.

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And the treasurer at the time was filling it in, and he put 96 and they sent it back to him, said, no, we don't need to know how many people you've got in your church. How many volunteers have you got? And he said, no, that is the number of volunteers that we've got doing things in and around the ministry of the church.

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That number has probably halved, as volunteers for doing various various things. I don't really like the word volunteer. I, you know, we've we've each got a ministry to perform and whether that's the ministry of preaching and leading or whether it's the ministry of hospitality

or whether it's the ministry of cleaning, the church, whether it's the ministry of visiting, there's a whole variety of ministries that we can fulfil.

00:14:48:06 - 00:15:05:00

From a volunteer perspective. But in my opinion that that is part and parcel of our vocation. You know, it. It's about being called to ministry. And I firmly believe every disciple of Christ is called to ministry in one form or another.

00:15:05:02 - 00:15:49:21

Jeanette

Yeah. And of course, the scriptural image, isn't it, of that every member being called to ministry is that we are the body of Christ, to be the hands and the feet in the hands and the ears and all of those things. ~~So, on that basis, if, if we're if we are all members together of the body of Christ, all bringing our own particular gifts and, you know, and Scripture doesn't, it says the hand can't or the I can't say to the, you know,~~ so in terms of thinking about parish ministry and then us in the diocese, as they say, what kind of whose responsibility is it to raise vocations?

00:15:49:23 - 00:16:14:21

Richard

I personally believe it's the responsibility of the local church. And I think that responsibility rests on the shoulders of the incumbent or a priest in charge, whatever they whatever their title is, you know, we are here to lead God's people, but we are here to disciple God's people as well. And and so that begins with the incumbent, and it begins with the culture of the church.

00:16:14:23 - 00:16:48:11

And I know I can I can feel the hairs on the back of my colleagues necks prickling as I speak, thinking, well, I'm busy enough as it is. I don't need any more work, and I can can sympathise with that. But actually, yes, it is hard work to begin with, but once you've got that culture embedded within the local church and you have developed that program of discipleship, however that fits into the local context, you will naturally see growth.

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- once we've agreed to do something, once we've set our strategy, our plan and our program, I just encourage them to get on with it.

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And if they want to bottleneck, then to start asking permission, then putting the permission onto my desk. And they know full well that that will just hold everything in abeyance, because

it just won't happen until I get round to it. I've told them what I want on my desk are problems. You get on with it, I'll sort the problems out.

00:17:31:16 - 00:17:46:23

And it works brilliantly well. But as I say, this is a culture that's taken 30 years, to develop and to embed into the life of the church. So it's not something that happens overnight.

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Jeanette

And that, that needs, if I, if I may say, that needs a kind of confident leader to let people get on with it, doesn't it, and to pick up the mistakes, but also I think what I would suggest is that that that frees you up then to do your particular vocation as well, which is to lead and and equip and enable and everybody, everybody else.

00:18:08:12 - 00:18:28:08

But what's so that's kind of within the parish setting. ~~What's what can we do. So if we at the diocese we're part of the body as well. What~~ what would you be wanting from, from us in the, in the diocese, in the, in the sort of ministry team. How can we support you in this.

00:18:28:10 - 00:19:10:04

Richard

The courses that are to the, that are available through ~~to~~ the Vocations Team to thinking about Living Faith, the Chad program, Pathways to Ministry, just to name three. They are a good opportunities for us to tap into, ~~now, in, in Wolverhampton Deanery, Readers are coming together this autumn so that we can put on a Living Faith program across the deanery so churches don't have to rely on that to do that within the parish, the parishes themselves, so we can support one another within the deanery to do that.~~

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And from courses like that, people should think, well, I really enjoyed that. I want to move on to something else and we can feed them into the pathways program, whether we can run that again as a deanery. But, or we can pick the phone up to, to, to you guys and sort of say, I've got so-and-so here, they're really interested in exploring vocation as a Reader or, or whatever, you know, can we feed them into one of the one of the diocesan programs?

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And having that support from the central team is, is really important because you've got the resources there, which we don't have in the parish.

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Jeanette

Yeah. And it's probably worth saying, isn't it, that our vocations advisers, the people that, candidates prospective think can go to vocations advisers and they're not just there for ordained ministry, they're genuinely helping people to work out.

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Richard

Yeah, absolutely.

00:20:03:14 - 00:20:20:05

Jeanette

What their vocation is I mean, I remember, you know, before I was ordained, go into go into actually it was a curate in my parish saying, I've about this weird idea that I might be being called to be a vicar, you know, and somebody to kind of sit and listen. You go, well, let's let's talk about that.

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It's not such a wacky idea. But as I said, it's for any, any vocation.

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Richard

We just had someone who's completed the Chad program, and they started a Chad program, not with the intention of being licensed as a Reader. They knew that they were called to licensed ministry, but that theological grounding that they've been able to undertake has given them the confidence to step forward and say, okay, I feel ready to take on other roles.

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And, they are taking on the role of assistant parish safeguarding officer, which is something prior to starting the Chad program, they wouldn't have even contemplated as something that they could do, but it's given them the confidence to do that. And that's a real blessing to us.

00:21:05:11 - 00:21:28:17

Jeanette

And that's that's really interesting because we I think in terms of if I mean, the diocese is saying and this is part of its strategy, that we want to increase vocations of vocational culture, as I said, but we also want to raise up new licensed and, ordained ministers, 30 of each in, you know, by, in six years time.

00:21:28:18 - 00:22:02:08

Yeah. Which feels a big kind of ask, but we want to be, you know, with people of hope. We want to we want to aim high., dream our dreams see our visions, all of that. But I think often what we're faced with is, is that when people come on, say, the Chad program on and don't end up going into some form of licensed ministry, people can think that things are not happening and things are not moving, but but for us in the team, if somebody says, oh, actually, I'm affirmed in my.

00:22:02:10 - 00:22:03:05

Richard

Yeah, absolutely

00:22:03:05 - 00:22:13:04

Jeanette

call as a, you know, a safeguarding officer or I know I'm definitely in the right place doing X, Y and Z in the parish. Yeah, that's a win for us. We we count that.

00:22:13:06 - 00:22:35:16

Richard

Absolutely. And I'm and you know, the sad thing is that, that they don't get the recognition, you know, that sort of that, that, that that the licensing of Readers at the end of that program is a sort of a graduation, whereas those that that have done the training and have moved into less visible roles don't get that sort of that acknowledgement.

00:22:35:16 - 00:23:01:22

Jeanette

So, yeah, that acknowledgement of of people who don't necessarily get a bishop's license. Of course we have, we have the, local commissioning scheme, in the diocese where we really wanted to say to people actually celebrate these ministries that are going on locally commissioned people. Yeah. Acknowledge that, you know, that that great breadth of ministry that's being offered.

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~~And, so we're hoping that more people in our parishes will take up those, that idea about acknowledging, you know, of course, there are people out there who will want to do their ministry very quietly in the background and faithful servants service and all of that. But also, I think it's really encouraging, isn't it, to see somebody and have some praise, as it were, and recognised.~~

00:23:27:15 - 00:23:37:24

And also, there's something about visibility, isn't there, about I look at somebody and, you know, as, as obviously as a female priest, I looked at those who came before me going.

Oh. There's somebody like me in that, in that role. And that, that set, that idea of visibility is important, I think, because I.

00:23:47:06 - 00:24:25:12

Richard

Absolutely, if you can see, you can be it is a phrase that is often used. **And I think it's important that the the representative, up front visible leadership team of the church should be representative of, of the body of the congregation, both ethnically, in terms of gender and in terms of generation as well.** When I arrived here, in 2014 and was licensed, one of the first questions that I was asked was, we have a PCC away day in September.

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What are you going to do about it? And I said, well, let's, let's go away and talk about about that and I did some teaching on, on Revelation in the seven letters, and we wrote a letter to Holy Trinity, to what can we be commended for and what's missing? And one of the comments that came out of that was, and it was a very brave comment, I was I mean, I can still hear the voice, of of the individual concerned who looked at us in the plenary session at the end of the day and said, you're up front, leadership team is too white, not, OUR upfront leadership team.

00:25:07:00 - 00:25:34:14

And we all looked around at one another and said, you know, he's right. And so we did something about it. And that individual, Rob was licensed as a Reader last September and, it's but that took a journey of ten years, ~~you know, which is, well, a journey of nine years.~~ And that wasn't a consequence of anything that he could or couldn't do.

00:25:34:16 - 00:26:03:24

It's just that these processes often take time. People need time to process. But it's really important that we're representative, and in a, in a congregation in a community which is ethnically and culturally diverse, it's important that we have full representation, in terms of our PCC, in terms of a ministry team and, and also in terms of the visible representation on the podium on a Sunday morning as well.

00:26:04:01 - 00:26:14:04

Jeanette

And how do you maintain your enthusiasm for all this?

00:26:14:06 - 00:26:42:01

Richard

Prayer! I, I just love working with people. I just love to see people flourish. And, and all joking apart, you know, it's about praying, praying for this and praying for, for for the, praying for the

people, praying for their abilities to come to the fore praying for their confidence to, for the fore and, and also, you know, praying for the sustenance and strength to, to, to carry on and to do what God's called us to do.

00:26:42:03 - 00:27:03:17

Jeanette

~~And is that your top tip – prayer? Is there anything else that if if you've just had a curate, haven't you, who's moving on? So so it's just moved on. So in terms of what advice would you give to her or anybody about this change, you know, this culture that you've obviously I know you said you built on it, but this culture of growing vocation.~~

~~00:27:03:19 – 00:27:27:23~~

Richard

~~Yeah, I mean, prayer is is vitally important.~~ And everything should begin and end with prayer and prayer should continue as a consequence throughout, from beginning to end. When we pray for God's kingdom to come and for God's will to be done, and we pray faithfully and purposefully, then we see results. God will answer those prayers for us.

00:27:27:23 - 00:27:37:09

I've seen it so many times here. So, you know, it's a cliché, but it shouldn't be a cliché. Prayer is vitally important in the process.

00:27:37:11 - 00:28:00:20

Jeanette

And and well, I've just it was once made a comment to me that there was concern around if we got everybody in the church doing lots of things. Then if the vicar left the diocese, not might, might not send them a new one because they, you know, everybody was keeping the church going.

00:28:00:22 - 00:28:30:12

Richard

~~I think, though I think the contrary to that is absolutely true. You know, it's not the fact, you know.~~ Yes. The, the, the mission and the ministry of the church would continue. And that's as it should be. But the diocese and I think the senior leadership of the church recognise the fact that when you've got a thriving church, you know, the last thing you want to do is to have a long vacancy between between incumbents.

00:28:30:14 - 00:28:56:12

I think it's it's important that, that people recognise the fact that the diocese's senior leadership of the church recognise the value of having incumbents in post and particularly in

thriving churches. So I think it's, it's it's yeah, it's not something that people should be concerned about.

00:28:56:12 - 00:28:57:16

Yeah, it.

00:28:57:18 - 00:29:03:21

Jeanette

Is. So you, you mentioned prayer, Richard. Shall we shall we pray together?

00:29:03:22 - 00:29:05:17

Richard

Absolutely. Yes.

00:29:05:19 - 00:29:38:00

Jeanette

Let's pray. So, Heavenly Father, we, give thanks for, the vocations to which you've called us. We thank you for the gift of of your people within our churches. And, we pray, Lord, for our diocese and for all those who are currently exploring their vocations, for those who feel that they are, perhaps not worthy or whatever to, to step into particular roles.

00:29:38:02 - 00:29:56:22

And we pray for those who are on the, on on that particular journey of discerning what it is to, that you are calling them to. And so, Lord, we ask that you would, make us faithful disciples and that together we would work for the building of your kingdom in Jesus name, Amen.

00:29:56:24 - 00:29:59:06

Richard

Amen. Thank you. Jeanette.

00:29:59:06 - 00:30:03:04

Jeanette

Thank you. Thank you for your time. It's been lovely to spend some time to chat with.

00:30:03:04 - 00:30:05:17

Richard

You, so you're very welcome.

00:30:06:17 - 00:30:37:24

Jeanette

so we've talked quite a bit about, parish ministry, haven't we? And people fulfilling roles in, in the, in the church and in the life of the, of the church. ~~Do you have any, any sense of that? What you do, officer? I'm sorry. That's a tough question. Do you~~ what might you say if somebody feels called to something outside of the four walls of the of the church, you know, some form of community service or something along those lines.

00:30:38:01 - 00:31:01:11

Richard

Within within a, team here? We employ a youth and community worker. Now, that sounds a like we're loaded with money. Her salary is entirely grant funded from external sources. And I might add, not from the diocese, but, there is, so. So she works, predominantly outside of the church. So she's connected into our local schools.

00:31:01:11 - 00:31:34:00

We second her into the local secondary academy two days a week. She works in our local Church of England primary academy. And and her role is is very much connecting the community outside of the church with the church and just taking, taking her, you know, the love of Christ out into the community. And we have, people who are willing to go into our local school and lead worship, once a week.

00:31:34:02 - 00:32:01:08

~~And, in, in the term assembly is probably more, more familiar to people, but but it, it's considered to be worship within a, within a local, primary academy. And so we, you know, we've, we've got people who are going into the schools and it's important that it's not just the vicar that is doing these things. It's good that the collar gets seen, in, in the wider community, and I have that interaction.~~

00:32:01:08 - 00:32:24:12

But it's vitally important that we've got other people who are working in, in such roles. I know that the, the, the lead chaplain at, New Cross Hospital ~~who's part of our deanery team? Or the dean chapter, he, he~~ wants to encourage people to be a part of that vocational ministry within within the hospital.

00:32:24:17 - 00:32:52:13

And likewise, the lead chaplain at the local youth offenders prison. at Brinsford. They're they've both spoken about the work of chaplaincy and drawing people from the local church, as has the chaplain from the University of Wolverhampton. So those connections are really important. I mean, yes, the chaplains are ordained people, but you can exercise a vocational ministry well beyond the confines of the church in such places.

00:32:52:15 - 00:33:22:18

Jeanette

And there's something isn't there, in, in, in that outside of the confines of the local church, there's something about affirming people in their workplaces, as I'm sure, like, you know, anybody who or even, you know, those who stay at home or, you know, vocation is much broader, isn't it, than the job that we do. Yeah, either in or out outside of the church, but about partly about who we are and, you know, being affirmed and encouraged in being the best of whatever.

00:33:22:20 - 00:33:42:23

Richard

Yeah. Being a disciple in our place of work in secular environments is a really, really powerful witness to the love of God. I can remember before, when I had a proper job at the when I was employed in the steel industry and people knew I was a Christian, you know, and yeah, you'd get the brickbats and you get the you'd get the jokes.

00:33:43:02 - 00:34:07:10

But actually when they were in when people were in crisis or they were troubled, it would be me that they'd come to and sort of say, well, I want to talk to you about such and such. And I know that's true of other people as well in their work environments, people seek them out just for conversation because they know that they're Christians, and hopefully they can be trusted.

00:34:07:12 - 00:34:18:01

So that vocational call stems from our discipleship. And I think that's really important. And out of that flows evangelism.

00:34:18:03 - 00:34:23:09

Jeanette

You took the words out of my mouth