

## A wedding, honeymoon and ordination - all within three weeks

ABBIE Cann will have a busy three weeks this June. She'll get married, go on a week's honeymoon, move to the Isle of Wight with her new husband - and then get ordained.

The 24-year-old, who is currently at Trinity College, Bristol, got engaged to Ollie Lynch last year.

She knew she would be completing her theological course this summer, and was therefore likely to be ordained at the end of June.

And when she and Ollie were working out when and where to get married, they hit upon June 7, as the time when their ideal wedding venue was available.

They'll then head off to Portugal for a week's honeymoon. The week after that involves them moving to the island - where Abbie will be serving as curate in Newport, Carisbrooke and Gatcombe.

The next week will be Abbie's pre-ordination retreat, praying and reflecting with her fellow candidates.

And then at 11am on June 28, Bishop Jonathan will ordain her at Portsmouth Cathedral as a deacon, alongside nine others. She'll then be able to wear clergy robes, lead services and be

called 'the Reverend'. By that time, of course, she will be the Rev Abbie Lynch.

After a formal welcome to the congregations the day after, she'll finally be able to relax with her new husband, in a new home, with a new job.

"Yes, it will be a busy summer," she said. "But it is all exciting, and sometimes God calls us to jump into things with both feet at once.

"Part of wanting to get married and then get ordained is about wanting to start off ordained ministry as a married woman, and as a couple. We thought we might as well do both of these things together.

"It is about going where God leads, and it's also an adventure. Doing life with God is always an adventure, and this is just part of that.

"As it happens, I'm quite an organised person as well, so everything is on a spreadsheet. That doesn't sound very romantic, but it is practical!" Abbie grew

up in a New Frontiers church near Winchester. Among others, she was inspired by her primary school teacher who was a good female role model. She started worshipping at a Church of England church in Winchester, and began to work out that God was calling her to church leadership.

She went on the Church of England's Ministry Experience Scheme, which gives young people a taste of church leadership. Abbie's father Jamie was also recently ordained in Winchester Cathedral, becoming a deacon in 2023 and a priest in 2024. He's now also a curate in Winchester diocese.

She met Ollie a couple of years ago. He works as a data analyst for a financial services company, so can work remotely in their new home. He's currently living in Bath.

"We'd never planned to move to the Isle of Wight, but now that we've visited, we're excited about what God's doing there," said Abbie. "I'll also look forward to exploring the amazing scenery and seeing the beaches."



Abbie Cann and Ollie Lynch preparing to get married this summer; below: Abbie, who will be the new curate at Newport, Carisbrooke and Gatcombe



"My mother is delighted and I do think my father would be chuffed, although he might have asked why it has taken me 30 years to get to this point! He has, of course, helped to shape my life and faith, and it's great to be able to carry on this family tradition."

Meanwhile, Rachel Rider has had Gosport on her heart since a visit three years ago. She arrived by sea when helping friends transport a yacht for that year's Fastnet Race. After her ordination, she'll become a curate at **Haven Church, Gosport** - Christ Church, Holy Trinity and St John's.

"We set sail from Essex and travelled overnight, along the south coast, in September 2022," she said. "I sensed God wanted me to pray for all the places we passed along the coast of England, for Europe and for the many refugees travelling across the Channel at that time. We moored up in Gosport and the others sailed onto the Isle of Wight."

"I believe God goes before us and am excited that I've already visited Gosport before I move there. I could not have anticipated feeling so much peace at moving somewhere new. I believe God has called me to be part of these exciting churches for this next season."

Rachel grew up in London and studied to be a physiotherapist in Salford. After working in Greater Manchester, she returned to London and worshipped at All Souls, Langham Place, while working among children with disabilities and complex needs at special needs schools. At All Souls she joined the PCC and served as a trustee for a charity working with women who had been trafficked and with those who found themselves homeless.

"I think God has generously gifted me with a passion to speak about injustices, and to make sure the gospel is good news for all people in every situation," she said.

Two years ago, she was invited to join Saint Church, a network of Anglican churches in East London, while completing her ordination

## 'My niche is the elderly'

IT was the loss of her unborn daughter that inspired Carolyn Shannon to embrace ministry - especially among older people and those facing bereavement.

She will be one of three candidates who will be licensed as Readers in our cathedral on June 21, meaning they'll be able to lead services and preach regularly.

That will help Carolyn to stay involved with families during and beyond the funerals of their loved ones, which will ensure continuity of care. She is already an Anna Chaplain in Leigh Park, visiting the elderly in the community.

"I feel as though my niche is the elderly, and those who need support after bereavement," she said. "I had three daughters, but I lost my fourth in vitro, just before her due date.

"Everything I've done since then has been because that experience has spurred me on. I can talk about bereavement because we've been through it. I've been involved with the charity Sands, which offers support for those who have lost babies, and then was one of the first cohort of Anna Chaplains.

"It was frustrating to be caring for someone before they died, and not to be part of the funeral.



Carolyn Shannon and her husband Roland in the Vatican

This will tie the two aspects together, and I can be involved from start to finish.

"It was actually on a visit to St Peter's in the Vatican where I felt called to get on with it. So I've been studying at Sarum College in Salisbury. It's great to mix there with Readers and ordinands from six or seven dioceses, and get a wider outlook on faith."

Carolyn has been part of St Francis Church in Leigh Park for more than 45 years, and is also a churchwarden there.



Rachel Rider: a lover of sailing training at St Mellitus College. There she has helped run Alpha courses and led services at the Shoreditch location, run lighthouse lunches for vulnerable adults

and supported mid-week prayer gatherings and conferences. This year she has been service pastor for a new Sunday service at the West Ham location.

"One of the things I've valued most about my time at Saint is its diversity and our commitment to inclusion," she said. "We are communities of high ethnic diversity and want to be places of healing for those who have experienced racism, or discrimination.

"I'm coming to Gosport with lots to learn, but hopefully lots to give as well. I'm excited for everything that God has in store for us."

Read more on [www.portsmouth.anglican.org/ordinations](http://www.portsmouth.anglican.org/ordinations)