

Bishop Jonathan with (l to r): Jan Fuller, Sue Jones, Jill Phipps, Will Alvarez, Jenn Camirand and Buffy Langdown

Meet our new clergy following God's call

We've already seen new deacons and priests ordained over the summer. Another set of new clergy will follow this Michaelmas

SHE had been a teacher for 24 years – but felt God calling her to become a vicar. After putting it off for years, she finally became the Rev Buffy Langdown when she was ordained this summer.

Buffy had spent most of her career teaching at St John the Baptist C of E Primary School in Rowlands Castle, but left teaching to volunteer at St Luke's Church in Southsea. Being there gave her the chance to think about how God was calling her to ordained ministry.

She started her theological training in September 2020, initially being taught digitally because of the constraints imposed during the Covid pandemic. Her three-year course ended this summer. After ordination, she's been working as a curate in All Saints, Denmead.

Buffy was one of six people ordained as a deacon in our cathedral by Bishop Jonathan in

June. A further six people who were ordained as deacons in summer 2022 were ordained as priests on the same day.

'It is scary, but you have to inhabit the clergy role, while still being yourself'

"I'd always had a sense of God calling me into ministry," she said. "I looked at it in my early 30s, when our children were small, but didn't feel that the timing was right. I put it on the back-burner. But there was a gradual process, and I eventually realised that I needed to give up teaching in order to explore my vocation.

"Working for St Luke's as a youth and children's worker gave me time to work through things, but deep down I knew I was called to it. I

realised that if I didn't do it now, the opportunity might be missed."

Buffy had grown up with a Christian faith, but was diagnosed with ME – now known as chronic fatigue syndrome – when she was aged 18 and at university. She met and married her husband Pete, and shortly afterwards went on a healing retreat where she was prayed for. Her health was transformed.

"When I had ME at university, my tutors were very understanding and supportive," she said. "But this healing retreat made such a difference. They prayed for you every day, and when my parents picked me up afterwards, they said I was so different – my eyes had changed colour and were full of life. Pete had never known me with such energy. And there has been no recurrence since."

Buffy and Pete had two children,

Senior teacher will also be a Reverend

IT'S not easy doing theological training when you're also holding down a full-time, responsible job – but Clare King wouldn't miss it for anything.

She had enough work already as Head of Science and Computer Science at the Bay C of E School on the Isle of Wight. But when she trained to become a lay minister, she'd dash straight from work to cross the Solent for training sessions on the Portsmouth Pathway.

Once God called her to ordination, it involved her doing something similar every Monday night. She's one of seven people who will be ordained as clergy as part of our first Michaelmas cohort in September.

"Being on the Portsmouth Pathway was beyond my wildest expectations of awesomeness," she said. "It was the most incredible thing in terms of my journey of faith. It involved deconstructing my faith and reconstructing it again, with a fantastic group of people.

"I'd leave the house at 6.45am for a busy day at school as a head of department, scurry across on the fast cat, spend three hours on the Pathway, and only get back at 10.30pm. But I never missed an assignment. It's similar now, but I do it on Monday nights and go to St Jude's, Southsea."

Clare's grandfather was a vicar and her childhood involved church and Sunday School. She got to the age of 15 and her life became consumed with athletics. She

Tobi and Samuel, and Buffy settled into life as a primary school teacher. She gave up that role in 2018, just as Tobi went to university, to work at St Luke's, which is also the location of our in-house ordination training course, Portsmouth Pathway.

"The director of Portsmouth Pathway, James Grenfell, called me into his office and suggested that we start the process," she said.

didn't re-find faith until she went to the USA to study for her Masters and Doctorate degrees.

"I was in Alabama and it's a faith-driven community," she said. "People would ask 'Do you pray?' and I was able to say I did – I'd never lost my ability to pray. I resisted church until one day when I went. It was very charismatic, with people speaking in tongues. I made friends and I fell in love with Calvary Baptist Church, and how people openly embraced Christ-like living.

"When I came back to the UK, I wanted to find a similar church. I tried 27 different churches in and around Southampton, but didn't find one I liked."

Clare met her husband, moved to the Isle of Wight and joined Holy Trinity Church, Bembridge, when her daughter was 18 months old. She thought it was important that her children learnt about faith and they grew up in the church.

"It was more old-fashioned and couldn't be more different from my church in America," she said. "But it's where we needed to be. My son liked the echo and would roar like a dinosaur. The vicar just said all dinosaurs were welcome!"

Clare started teaching at the Sandown school that ultimately became the Bay C of E School. She already felt she had a ministry there talking to colleagues about faith, but being licensed as a Reader gave her more reason to talk about it and challenge misconceptions.

More recently, when Holy Trinity

"I had been hesitating about it, so that really helped."

Buffy's first two terms on the Pathway involved digital teaching, with just a handful of meetings as Covid restrictions allowed. She's been grateful for the chance to meet in person since then.

Trainee clergy and Readers meet each Tuesday night for food, worship and teaching during term-



Clare King

was between vicars, she found herself part of the team leading the church as the only person licensed as a lay minister to lead services.

"I didn't really want to be the only leader in church," she said. "I'd much rather be part of a team. But the new vicar, Steve Daughtery, was an answer to prayer in that he could show me a really positive view of what good leadership looks like.

"I realised that God still wants me to be a teacher, but one who can preach and teach in church, and more importantly bring people to know and love Jesus.

"I can still do Sunday School, lead Lent courses and other things, but I want God to use me for who I am, at work and in church. Ordination will be an acknowledgement that I have a formal role to play in sharing God's love with others. I cannot wait."

time, mixed with residential sessions at Ripon College Cuddesdon, near Oxford.

"There were six in our group and we knew we had to work quite hard to get to know each other," she said. "We organised extra meetings on Zoom just to chat.

"The first time we met was at Hayling Island eating fish and chips in the rain, because restrictions at