

Brother and sister are both now clergy

THIS brother and sister can remember going to church together as youngsters – now they're both members of the clergy.

The Rev Jo-Anne Newton, 64, was one of 18 deacons ordained at our cathedral in June – on the same day as six new priests were also ordained. Her brother, the Rev Jonathan Jeffery, 61, has been a member of the clergy for 25 years, but they have influenced each other from a young age.

They both can remember attending church as a family and have fond memories of going to 'Sunday Special Club' at St John the Evangelist, Fareham.

"I was taken to church as a baby," Jo-Anne said. "I can remember, as a very young child, just playing at the back of the church and then Sunday School as soon as I was old enough. I became a Christian at 10. I was trying to be quite outgoing and active, so my little brother got a lot of my enthusiasm for Jesus."

Jonathan was ordained deacon in 1997 and priest in 1998. He has been vicar of the parishes of Leigh Park and Warren Park since 2001. Meanwhile, Jo-Anne was licensed as a Reader in 1998 at Soberton and Newtown, and was later licensed as a Reader with the chaplaincy team at the Queen Alexandra Hospital. She is now assistant curate at Holy Trinity with St Columba in Fareham.

As brother and sister, they have had similar experiences of the process of ordination. "I think my highlight of the process was when we had



The Rev Jo-Anne Newton and her brother, the Rev Jonathan Jeffery

to pray for each other on the last night of the retreat," Jo-Anne said. "The gifts they saw in me were really powerful and meant a lot to me because they saw love, joy, and peace."

Jo-Anne had some reservations about ordination. "You don't see it in yourself," she said. "Sometimes you need other people to affirm it."

And Jonathan said: "For me, that is the Spirit at work in this process. It's the Spirit that makes you take the next step and carries you along the journey – to be Spirit-led and Spirit-moved. It has always been clear in my mind that ordination is about a 'living gospel' that means something in the world and in community, rather than just about what happens in church."

"I have learnt a lot more patience," Jo-Anne reflected. "At times it hasn't been easy to be patient – I

have been a bit frustrated at times, so patience is something I value. Just to accept people as they are."

Before her ordination service, Jo-Anne was moved by the Spirit to start singing a Taizé-style chant while the candidates were seated at the east end of the cathedral. Later in the service, Bishop Jonathan started singing the same chant, encouraging others to join in. Jo-Anne said, "This was a key moment for me. I was approached afterwards by someone who told me she felt the Spirit move like she'd never felt before."

Jo-Anne is excited to be working alongside people in her parish. "My real passion is people. I'm going into care homes and doing Messy Vintage, mother and toddler groups, friendship groups, and Mothers' Union. Just to go and talk to people and let God's light shine out."