

Society in Oxford on a three-year pioneer ministry course. "What's been brilliant is its practical focus," he said. "It's not just academic, I've been able to reflect on the work I'm already doing in the parish. Now, to have that formally recognised and to be licensed by the bishop feels really special."

Although he'd been considering different forms of ministry, this path stood out. "It felt like the most exciting option," he said, "even if it was quite different from anything I might have originally imagined doing."

Throughout the course, Steven's assignments have been rooted in real-life ministry, whether that's Muddy Church, Bubble Church, or even creative outreach like their annual 'pancakes in the pub' event.

"It's about challenging expectations and thinking differently about what church can look like," he said. "Interestingly, being a Reader was never something I felt called to. But it's wonderful that I'll be licensed with them. The service in June will really celebrate the diversity of lay ministry."

A period of vacancy in the parish created space for new ideas and conversations. "It gave us the freedom to ask what counts as pioneering and what lay people can do," Steven said. He points to growing opportunities for relational ministry, especially around baptisms and confirmations.

"A member of the clergy leads the baptism itself. But as the person who has built relationships with families before, it's a privilege to be a part of the service. It's similar with confirmations, we've been exploring who can be involved in presenting candidates."

Steven will be the first lay pioneer minister licensed in our diocese since Katie Moritz in 2023.

Read more about Licensed Lay Ministry, and how you could get involved, on www.portsmouth.anglican.org/llm

Anna Chaplaincy allows lay people to be spiritual support

ANNA Chaplains are a great example of a parish-based lay ministry that can make a real difference to our outreach.

Our diocese has a network of more than 60 Anna Chaplains who are usually lay people offering spiritual care to the elderly in care homes or their own homes. They fall into the category of **Locally-Recognised Lay Ministers** in our new structure.

And in Emsworth, those Anna Chaplains run a monthly café-style church that has become so popular that it is just about to double its frequency. For many who come to the Anna Café in the hall of St James Church, it is their 'church'.

Dozens of elderly people meet for a half-hour act of worship, including hymns, prayers and a short talk.

There's also a 'personal blessing' which involves Anna Chaplains and Anna Friends holding the hands of each individual and praying for them personally, with appropriate permissions. They then share lunch together.

It has been running for around 18 months, organised by the curate the Rev Lizzie Davidson and the parish's five Anna Chaplains and four Anna Friends. Sue Ingram was one of the original Anna Chaplains in place when the café started. She's been an Anna Chaplain for

two years and also visits five care homes each month.

"The Anna Café attracts people who might find it difficult to stand for worship in church, or for whom lunchtime is a better time," she said. "I love seeing people come together to worship."

"And when we visit care homes, we are taking God's presence with us. Anna Chaplaincy is a spiritual ministry, and it is to staff as well as residents."

And Dennis Chandler, who has been an Anna Chaplain for six years, said: "I enjoy getting alongside people and proclaiming the gospel at the Anna Café."

"The physical contact and eye contact we give in the individual blessing can be vital for those who might not see family or friends often. It actually means just as much to us as it does to them."

"We do visit people at home, and we can also pick up the phone and speak to someone who wants to chat. Whatever we do, we bring 'church' with us."

Meanwhile, Jane Wilshaw is the person who co-ordinates our network of Anna Chaplains on the Isle of Wight. She has been an Anna Chaplain for three years and is based at St Blasius Church in Shanklin.

"We receive referrals from the congregation, and from GP



Anna Chaplain Caroline Free with some of those who attend the Anna Café Church at St James, Emsworth; right: Jane Wilshaw and her dog Kai

practices," she said. "We go into three care homes in Shanklin and Sandown and offer people services and Communion."

"I became involved after returning to the island from Saudi Arabia and having an experience of being in a hospital myself. The chaplain gave me Communion and I realised how important it is to provide spiritual care for the elderly."

"I do use my peekapoo Kai in my ministry - he's a cross between a poodle and a

Pekingese. He can charm the people that I see, and we do always get a response."

Jane was director of nursing at St Mary's Hospital on the island, and helped to rebuild the health service in Iraq for a year after the Iraq War. She then did something similar in Saudi Arabia for two and a half years before retirement.

For more details about Anna Chaplaincy, see: www.portsmouth.anglican.org/anna



Mark Sandland, from St Jude's Church, Southsea

Local course helped me to improve my sermons

IT was a course that was organised and delivered by a single parish - and helped to train a dozen or so lay people in preaching.

And for Mark Sandland, the preaching course run by St Jude's Church, Southsea, made a massive difference to the preparation and delivery of his sermons there.

It's another example of training for **Locally-Recognised Lay Ministers** within our diocese. The former vicar, the Rev Adam Tams, facilitated the

course in St Jude's, using material from Prisca, a national organisation formed in 2021 to improve the skills of preachers.

Mark had preached at other churches already, and been through an online version of the Prisca course before. But he was happy to attend weekly sessions with a handful of other lay preachers at church.

"We worked through a process called 'Text to Talk' which helps you to work out who you are speaking to, what

their needs are, and then how to present it," he said. "Having that kind of structure was really helpful."

"The interaction with others was also helpful, as we tried preaching on the same passages. Others had different styles or different ideas that we could learn from."

"And we each gave feedback to one another as well. That gives you confidence in areas where you've done well, and pointers about how to be better. I've preached

several times since, all at St Jude's evening service, and it has made a difference. For instance, I'd struggled with keeping to time, but it's better now."

"You discover what works for you - for instance I'm better with bullet points rather than a complete text. I do enjoy the evening services, as it gives you space to be more experimental."

The team of lay preachers has proved to be useful as the church has just been through a vacancy.