

St Michael and All Angels

Serving the community of West Andover

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From Mary's Desk



As I was licensed as an assistant priest at St. Michael's on 7th January, I've been asked to write a brief article so I can introduce myself and my ministry to you all. I have already chatted to many of you by now, but hopefully this will fill in some of the

gaps in our conversations. So here goes.....

My name is Mary, and I'm married to Peter. We have no children. Our recent move into the area was as a result of Peter's job - he is ordained too, and is an Army Chaplain, currently based in Middle Wallop.

It's now 22 years since I left theological college, having first been licensed as a deaconess in 1985. Some 20 months later, I was privileged to be one of the first women to ordained deacon. Being a deacon was (and still is) important to me, and the 20th anniversary of the C of E ordaining women to the Diaconate falls this month. It was mainly because of this feeling of importance for the diaconate that I didn't seek ordination as priest when that first became possible for women. However, I felt some years later that God was now calling me to take this further step, and so was ordained priest in 1999.

Since leave theological college, I have worked in a number of different situations. I service my curacy in Worcester City Parish, where my role included both hospital and retail chaplaincy. After this, I became the World Mission Officer for Worcester diocese. This built on the great interest in world mission that there is in my home parish in Liverpool, and which I took my next role - being the representative in the Diocese in Europe for USPG (a major Anglican mission agency). As this wasn't full-time, I was able to combine it with parish responsibilities when we moved back to the UK from Germany - first in Aldershot, then in a large rural benefice of six parishes in Shropshire, then in Wrecclesham in Surrey, the in Pimperne in Dorset, and latterly in Catterick, North Yorkshire - and that brings me to my arrival her with you in St Michael's.

By the way, and in case you're wondering, before I went to theological college I was laboratory technician in a veterinary pathology laboratory run by the Ministry of Agriculture. This was another of case of building on my previous background, as I am a farmer's daughter.

My current hobbies, though, don't really build on any particular bit of my past. I enjoy running and, having taken it up 11 years ago, have been mad enough to run the London Marathon 4 times



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plus numerous other races.

However, I've had to severely curtail my running to protect my knees following a major knee operation last April, and so am learning to enjoy swimming, cycling and walking instead (all information about nice cycling and walking routes in the area gratefully received...). I'm also qualified as an athletics coach and an athletics track official - and once said that whilst I'd never be a speedy athlete myself, I might make it to a championship on someone else's talents! What I'd never envisaged when I said that was that I might make it to the Olympics as Chaplain, which both Peter and I were privileged to do in 2004 in Athens. When I have time, I'm also interested in gardening, cookery, squash, tapestry, knitting, and (having lived there) 'things German' - though it does have to be said that I rarely have the opportunity to pursue any of these to any depth...

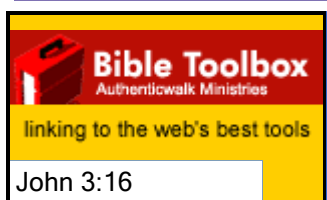
Alongside my ministry at St Michael's, I am the Chaplaincy Coordinator for Women in Sport, for a national Christian organisation called SCORE, which seeks to 'serve sport through chaplaincy'. This is a new role, both for me and for SCORE, and came out of my being a chaplain at the 2004 Olympics. It has involved a lot of laying foundations in the 20 months that I've been doing it so far. SCORE aims to make sports chaplaincy as widely accepted as chaplaincy as it is in other sectors such as hospitals, schools forces etc. There are currently about 150 sports chaplains across the UK, with most of them being in football clubs, although we also have chaplains in rugby (union and league), horse racing, and cricket, with one in athletics. Other sports many be opening up. My main responsibility is to encourage these same opportunities for women in sport, and I have recently been pleased to place the first chaplain in a female sports club - at the Female Football Academy in Bristol. Hopefully, more will follow. There's load more that I could say about SCORE but I'll save that for another conversation or article. (Please do ask if you're interested - I'll happily tell!)

One thing that I haven't mentioned so far is that I am also the tutor on distance learning courses for people interested in delving more deeply into their Christian faith. I firmly believe that, as disciples of Christ, we should all be engaged in lifelong learning about our faith. Whilst we don't all have t get involved in courses like the ones I tutor on, we do each have a responsibility to learn more about our faith and the Lord whom we follow. I very much look forward to engaging and sharing with you in the learning process whilst I'm here at St Michaels's.

Mary J. Vickers
March 2007

Reference sources (click on the links)

[Mary's Licensing at St Michaels](#)
[SCORE](#)
[Mary's Athens diary](#)



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