

Ministry Musings -

**THE MONTH OF NOVEMBER:
REMEMBRANCE
REDUCED DAYLIGHT
BONFIRES AND FIREWORKS
CHRISTMAS PUDDINGS
PREPARATION
ADVENT
WAITING
LIGHT
HOPE**

The month of November is a mix between the end of Autumn and the beginning of the winter months. It is a time of remembrance, beginning with 'All Saints' Day on November 1st and then Remembrance or Armistice Day on November 11th. Memories both corporate and individual of loved ones, as we think about issues of war, peace and loss.

November is also a time for Bonfires and fireworks and a time to think about gathering the ingredients to make Christmas puddings or a Christmas cake - if they are to our taste.

The annual cycle of the Church's year ends with the Feast of Christ the King on November 22nd, the sovereignty of Jesus becoming clear, not as a ruling Monarch but as a King ruling our hearts and lives.

As we start the liturgical year again, we look forward to the first Sunday of Advent on the 29th, a time of waiting and hope.

Sadly, many of the usual events may not happen this year but thank God that the season of Advent cannot be cancelled, it remains the time of hope, joy, love and peace.

Whatever happens, we have the certainty of a God that loves us enough to send His son Jesus to be among us and our hope is in him as we wait and watch for his coming.

We have hope, we can know peace, because Jesus brings peace to all who trust him. At this time, we prepare our hearts to receive his peace.

We hope, we have peace, we can know joy. Jesus brings us joy as we live out our lives as his children and his disciples.

We hope, we know peace, we know joy, we know love.

God's gift of love to us in the form of Jesus, Emmanuel, light of the world. We trust in him and prepare our hearts to receive his love.

Through these difficult and uncertain months ahead, keep hoping, stay peaceful, remain joyful and may we know the love of God in our hearts always.

Blessings

Judith

Congratulations to Nick Childerhouse (Julia's Husband) was licensed as an LLM on Saturday 17th October at Bristol Cathedral



Photo - diobrizzle

Nick Childerhouse, "I worship at St Paul's church Chippenham with my family; my wife Julia (who was licensed last year) and three teenage kids. I grew up in New Zealand, but moved to the UK whilst traveling and pursuing my career in Pharmaceutical development. Throughout my life I have been convinced that nothing can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus (Rom 8:39), and have tried to live out my faith wherever I am- just as I am keen to encourage others to grow in their faith. The LLM formation has been a great opportunity to be pruned in some areas, to branch out into new areas, and continue to follow Christ's call to make disciples as I step into my new role within the Anglican church."

Race, ministry and me



We were relaxing by the tropical waters of the Indian ocean when we saw the chameleon. The children were enthralled by this little reptile as it moved around, it's colour gradually toning up or down to blend in better with the environment it was in. We were in Nilaveli, a small town on the east coast of Sri Lanka, on the last leg of a short trip to the country to show our children where we were originally from. We were reflecting on an amazing few days that we, as a family, had just experienced.

The trip was all the more special and poignant for me. Over three decades had passed since I had stepped foot in Jaffna, the town of my childhood in the north of Sri Lanka. The civil war had left an indelible mark on the landscape, but this was a place of beauty and memories for me. I left when I was 11, pushed out by civil war. Over the years I had dreamed of returning. I returned as an adult with my husband and three children to revisit a place that was so significant to both my Tamil and Christian identities. A highlight of my stay was worshipping at St John's Church, Jaffna. This was the Anglican church where my grandfather had been a priest; the church where my father had worshipped as a boy. This was the church that I was baptised in and where

we later worshipped. We only spent a few days there, but it was an important time of reconnection in a place where my early faith was rooted and nurtured.

"Even as I discerned my calling into licensed lay ministry and later to ordination, I did not really see that my race had a bearing on my faith or ministry."

As I look back, I now realise how significant it was that I saw this little reptile on the eve of our departure from Sri Lanka via Bangkok (where we had spent three and a half years) and back to the UK. I now realise that that little chameleon symbolised, in many ways, my own journey of faith and identity in the British church, a realisation that was only evident through my formation at theological college on my way to ordination. It might seem strange for me to say that I had never really given much thought to my race throughout the three plus decades when I had worshipped and later ministered (as a Lay Minister) in the church in the UK. My family and I had found such welcome and love in the churches we worshipped in that our race was never considered to be an issue. And this is the way it continued to be. Even as I discerned my calling into licensed lay ministry and later to ordination, I did not really see that my race had a bearing on my faith or ministry.

This, though, changed as I journeyed through theological college. The change was gradual as God slowly but clearly showed me that I was a bit like that chameleon, changing myself to fit the surroundings. In one sense, we are all a bit like chameleons; we don't like to stand out, so we try our best to fit in. However, God showed me that my chameleon-like behaviour made me hide part of who I was and that when God calls us, he calls all of us. Keeping a part of my self hidden made me less authentic.

So many people helped me on this journey of realisation including a friend who pointed out, quite correctly, that I did not bring anything of my culture or my experience to bear on my ministry. In theological college, I am particularly grateful for my Missiology tutor who actively encouraged me to bring my honest, authentic perspective to bear on the discussions we had. This was like a breath of fresh air! As an immigrant, it is easy to feel like an

outsider and so much of what you say is filtered out for the fear of offence or ridicule or just lack of understanding. Here was a chance to speak more honestly. To share the different perspectives, I had on so many issues. Lesslie Newbiggin's comment that 'the only way in which the gospel can challenge our culturally conditioned interpretations of it is through the witness of those who read the Bible with minds shaped by other cultures,' resonated with me deeply. My reading of the Bible and my understanding of my faith has been sown and nurtured in my Tamil Christian community and it was a perspective that I needed to share.

My journey was not taken alone. Other students who, whether they liked it or not, were termed as 'BAME ordinands' journeyed with me. Many of us realised that while fitting in and assimilating is a question of survival at times, our time in ministry in the Church of England was a call on us to be more authentic; to be more representative of the diverse beauty of Christ's church; to reflect something of that beautiful vision that we see in Revelation 7 where all nations, tribes and people worship at the foot of the throne of the Lamb. This, we realised, meant that as ministers sometimes we need to 'toe the line' and submit to the dominant culture in order to minister to those to whom we are called; at other times, however, we needed to have the courage to speak out more, to challenge, to question. People of a different cultural heritage are in a liminal place, a place between cultures and we can serve Christ best by being authentic to who we are and witnessing to the increasingly diverse society that surrounds us.

I step into a new season in my ministry as a deacon in the Church of England at a time when issues of race and ethnicity are in the forefront of many conversations, both in the Church and in society as a whole. I realise that my calling is for 'such a time as this' and that God has called me, all of me, to serve him by being authentic and true to the person he has made me to be. Being a chameleon is not an option!

Revd Anjali Kanagaratnam *Revd Anjali Kanagaratnam was [recently ordained as deacon](#) and is serving her curacy at the Bybrook Team Ministry in North Wiltshire. She is married to Neil and has three children.*