



Dear Church Family,

Sadly this the last monthly letter that I will be writing to you as Youth and Children's Minister, as at the end of the month Sarah and I are moving on. Its quiet hard to summarise what the last two years has been on just one side of A4. . . .

What really sticks out from my time at St. Mark's and St. Andrew's is that while serving alongside you it has been a joy to hear the journeys that you have each been on with the Lord, how He has worked in your lives and continues to work. Thank you for all welcoming me so warmly and sharing your stories with me, and for putting up with my cluelessness about the Church of England. Over these two years I have learnt so much about how the Anglican Church works and the privileged position it holds as a part of the community. It's my prayer that we never take that for granted, as the parish church people turn to us in times of struggle and hurt and let us always be an open door to care and love those who are hurt and lost.

In the two years that I have been with you I feel that Flipside is a real highlight of my time as we have seen it transformed from 2 young people once a fortnight to 40 to 60 kids each week, it is certainly not about numbers but each of the children that visit week by week get to witness Christian volunteers serving them, playing basketball and always available for a chat. Please remember them in your prayers as both Sarah and I leave the team. As a family we really focus on our Sundays together and it has been a blessing to be able to be involved in shaping and leading services that reach all members of the church family together such as Breakfast@9 and Together@ten, it's so heart-warming to see different generations joining in worship together. Thank you to all the volunteers who have made sessions fun and possible as well as being a great support and encouragement towards me.

All of these memories and more have helped me to test, examine and discern what I believe is a calling to full time ordained ministry in the Church of England. Which is why I am moving on, as I have been exploring ordination through the Diocese of Portsmouth and both Sarah and I feel that we are being called to move to the city. Come September I will be taking on the role as Young Adult's Pastor at a church plant, aimed at reaching the "missing generation" or 18 to 30 year olds, in the city centre called Harbour Church. The focus will be on the discipleship and equipping of the 20-30s to go out to their friends, families, communities and even wider to share the news of Jesus in relevant and life changing ways. All going well through the discernment process I hope to be able to start training at Wycliffe College, Oxford, on a placement based course in September 2019. Between now and then I will be working in the churches' high street coffee shop a few days a week and in the church the rest of the time, giving us both a chance to settle into Portsmouth and parenthood, as we are expecting our first child this November, before taking on studies as well!

Thank you all for being a part of my journey, no doubt I will be sharing your stories and the stories that we have made together in my next church and beyond! It's has been a joy to serve the Lord alongside each of you, as we have stepped out in faith, laughed and cried, we have done it as brothers and sisters in Christ. When we remember the suffering and triumph of our Saviour, denominations, age groups, background, whatever, pale into insignificance when we realise the cost that we were each bought with and the new life we have been given. It is easy to loose our joy and feel crushed by the world around us, but let's remember that Jesus crushed sin and death for each of us, be triumphant, be confident and be love to those around us, for Jesus sake.

Thank you and God bless,
Ed Haycock