

## MINISTRY STATISTICS for 2018

The 2018 Ministry Statistics provide a snapshot of the varied ministries being undertaken in parishes, chaplaincies and workplaces, and of the diversity of ministers leading worship, growing disciples and engaging in witness and evangelism, mission, community involvement and pastoral care from rural benefices to the inner city.

As clergy retire, the church faces the challenge of continually renewing ministry and responding to the needs of a new generation. While these statistics show that the number being ordained has remained steady over the past few years, the number entering training is rising and it is good to recognise the 587 ordinands who entered training in 2018. Each of those individuals has their own story to tell of vocation and discernment, often accompanied by parish clergy working with Diocesan Vocations Officers and Directors of Ordinands. The Discernment Team in Ministry, with our many colleagues who act as Bishops Advisors, delight in this shared task while recognising the significant commitment of time involved.

As this cohort completes their training in the next few years so we will begin to see an increase in those being ordained. This is a wonderful response to the work of the Spirit in raising up new ministers to serve the church and build the Kingdom for the future.

It is also encouraging to see increasing diversity among our clergy, though we still have a long way to go before those in public ministry truly reflect the whole church. We welcome the increase in BAME clergy and vocations and note the number of younger ordinands in the pipeline. We can see an increase in younger ordinands and recognise the challenge of encouraging younger women in ministry by encouraging family friendly policies. It is notable that a proportion of our NSM clergy are of incumbent status or ministering in parishes without incumbent colleagues. This is just one example of the way in which the shape of ministry is changing and will be a prompt to ensuring that training for ministry equips people for different shapes of ministry in the future.

The statistics remind us once again of the contribution made by the 7,000 clergy who continue to minister after retirement, and nearly 3,000 offering ministry without stipend.

Finally, it is important to recognise the vital contribution made by our lay ministers. At present these statistics recognise the ministry of Readers, some 8,000 in the church. Future research will identify and acknowledge other forms of active lay ministry, including that of pioneers and evangelists. Capturing data on these will give a fuller picture of the vitality and growth of the ministry of the Church of England as a whole. We are seeing change that will address the decline in ministry as older stipendiary clergy retire and bring growth, innovation, and grounds for greater confidence for the future of ministry.

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