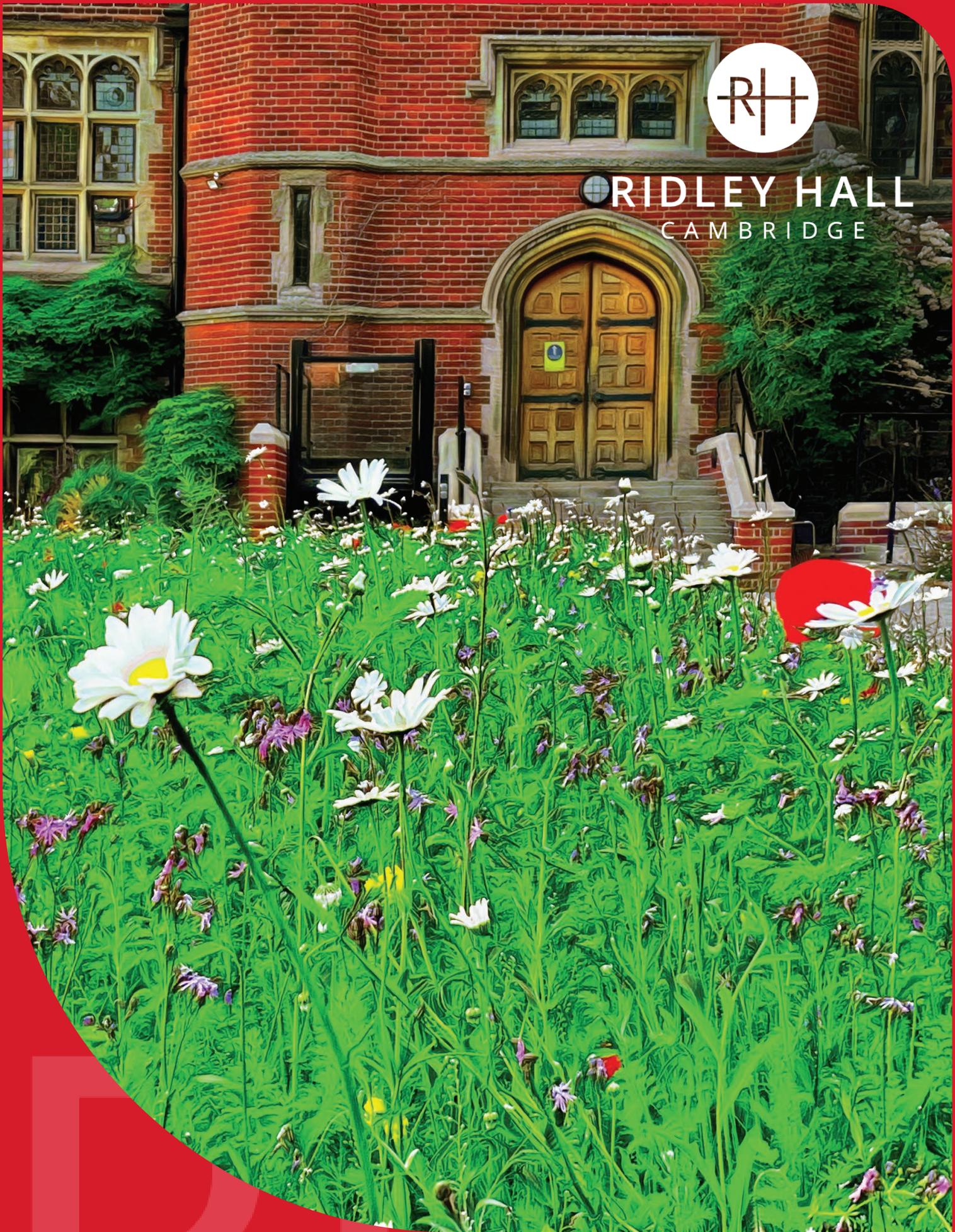




**RIDLEY HALL**  
CAMBRIDGE



**NEWS FROM RIDLEY** SUMMER 2021



[WWW.RIDLEY.CAM.AC.UK](http://WWW.RIDLEY.CAM.AC.UK)

### 3rd Global Congress on Sport and Christianity

Despite the pandemic, exciting developments have continued apace at Ridley over the past year, and we were recently able to announce that the 3<sup>rd</sup> Global Congress on Sport and Christianity (3GCSC) will be hosted by Ridley from 18<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> August 2022.

We look forward to welcoming delegates in person to this on-site event, with presentations from keynote speakers and contributors taking place on the 19<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> August. Arrival will be followed by a Gala Dinner on the evening of the 18<sup>th</sup> August and there will be ample opportunity for delegates to explore the historic city of Cambridge and beyond during the Congress.

Roger Lipe, Director of Character Coaching for Nations of Coaches and sports chaplaincy blog author, who has attended both the previous Sports Congresses, warmly recommended it to his readers, saying, "Please make plans for this event if you can. I know of no other event that gathers both practitioners of sports chaplaincy and the academic

community for conversation and collaboration like this one."

Further details, including speakers and delegate fees, will be confirmed in due course. To receive updates direct to your inbox as they are released, drop a note to Ridley's Director of Marketing and Communications, Dona McCullagh, on [dam45@cam.ac.uk](mailto:dam45@cam.ac.uk) to request to be added to our 3GCSC mailing list. We hope to see you there next summer!

### Archbishop of York to give C. F. D. Moule Memorial Lecture

We are looking forward to our Moule Day celebration next year which we hope will be able to go ahead without any of the restrictions that have limited us in 2020 and 2021.

The event will be held on Thursday June 9<sup>th</sup> 2022, and we are delighted that the Archbishop of York, the Most Reverend and Right Honourable Stephen Cottrell SCP, has accepted our invitation to deliver the C. F. D. Moule Memorial lecture. Details of tickets for this event will be released via our website and the Ridley Connection e-newsletter.

---

## Highlights in this issue:

---

**Front cover: Capernaum has come to Ridley Hall** RICK NELMS (page 15)

**The Ridley Award in Sports Mission and Ministry** page 4

**Innovation at Ridley Hall** page 5

**Curacy: Leading from the Second Chair** ANDREW APPIAH page 6

**Ember List 2021: Pray for our Leavers** page 7

**Ember Days: Lifelong Opportunities** CHARLES COWPER page 11

**A Look Back Over 15 Years** PHILIP JENSON page 12

**Progress Towards Accessibility for All** page 14

**Ridley Lay Ministry: From the inside** MIRIN NIEKIRK back cover



---

## Principal's welcome

---

**A**long with the rest of the world, the community at Ridley Hall found itself weathering the full impact of the pandemic during the past academic year.

Staff and students responded quickly and prayerfully; innovating new approaches to teaching and embracing creative forms of worship. However, we must also recognise that much that we value about residential training was lost. While we mourn these losses, we do so with hearts full of gratitude for God's faithfulness in the midst of our struggles. God is good and His grace is enough for us, whatever the challenge. A community of Christian learning and formation is exactly the right place to understand this truth in greater depth.

We come to Ridley in order to leave, and in June we were delighted to send out a large number of men and women to serve in leadership in churches around the UK. They have taken up curacies, youth, children, family, pioneer and sports ministry roles, and, drawing on their training and formation at Ridley, they will seek to witness to Jesus Christ in the communities in which they now find themselves. Please do join us in praying for them as they begin their work in the harvest field.

This summer we said goodbye to Philip and Ruth Jenson, who have served our community faithfully for fifteen years. As we do this, we prepare to welcome Revd Dr Andy Byers and his family. Andy will teach New Testament and he and the family will live on-site in Dashwood

House. I invite you to pray for them as they adjust to their new life among us.

At Easter we were overjoyed to see the completion—on time and on budget—of our major accessibility project. This significant construction project saw the installation of a series of ramps and lifts, a fully accessible new basement library and the creation of on-site accommodation, which will enable Ridley to be more financially sustainable.

*"God is good and His grace is enough for us, whatever the challenge. A community of Christian learning and formation is exactly the right place to understand this truth in greater depth."*

This issue of the annual Ridley magazine contains much to give thanks for and be encouraged about. The community is in good heart and we look forward to re-gathering in September and forming the community God is calling into being this academic year. We will continue to seek to love God and each other with all our hearts and to focus on preparing our students for effective Christian ministry. We will continue to strive to be active in our efforts to tackle the sin of racism, and to make a meaningful contribution to tackling the climate crisis. We have just completed a five-year strategic planning exercise and, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we look forward to seeking to realise exciting new initiatives and to seeing Ridley Hall continue to play a significant role in God's purposes for this nation. Please pray for us.

**REVD DR MICHAEL VOLLAND**  
Principal



---

## The Ridley Award: An introduction to mission and ministry through sport

---

This year sees the launch of a new self-paced online learning experience for anyone who wants to bring together their love of sport with their desire to share their faith.

Arising from the work of our Director of Innovation (see p. 5 opposite), the Ridley Award in Sports Mission and Ministry provides a solid foundation rooted in everyday faith, giving confidence to any Christian to put their love for sport in the service of God's purposes.

*"It feeds an instinctive longing to serve God through sport, bringing the listener into a new depth of biblical knowledge and richness of discipleship."*

Delivered by experts from the fields of theology, sport and ministry, the course takes the form of eighteen podcasts that actively encourage you to build on your current experiences through creative engagement with tasks within your own context. The format allows you to share your ideas and experiences with other participants, and to fit your learning around existing life commitments.

Fully accessible, with no prior qualifications required, the course can be

taken by individuals, or together as a local group who are seeking to explore how God might be calling them to engage with in mission in a sporting context. The Award can also be purchased as a gift, making it an ideal way for a local church or Christian organisation to affirm and encourage the calling of a parishioner or member of staff.

*"The Award can be purchased as a gift, making it an ideal way to affirm and encourage the calling of a church member."*

The immersive power of podcasts means that, unlike a traditional lecture-based or classroom-based course, the Ridley Award doesn't feel like learning, yet feeds an instinctive longing to serve God through sport, bringing the listener into a new depth of biblical knowledge and richness of discipleship. The format makes the learning experience fully accessible – instead of requiring you to set aside dedicated hours for traditional learning, the classes can be taken while exercising in the gym, walking the dog or travelling to work.

---

To register for the Award, or explore how this course might open up a new world of mission and ministry for someone in your church or sports group, access the first session for free or sign up for the full 18 sessions now:

[www.ridleyawards.online](http://www.ridleyawards.online)

## Innovation at Ridley Hall

Ridley has always been a place where innovative ideas are applied to meet the needs of the Church. This core value is now recognised in the appointment of Robin Barden as Director of Innovation. We spoke to him about his work and his vision for the new role.

**Q: Robin, can you tell us about your role as Director of Innovation?**

My focus is on delivering innovation in training without losing the excellence of what we do. My first involvement with Ridley was with a youth ministry programme which I then developed into our current Ridley Lay Ministry programme, introducing block weeks and other innovations. More recently, we established a teaching centre in London which has evolved and been developed to provide dedicated online teaching (*see p. 11*).

**Q: What's the latest innovation that you have been working on?**

Our most recent innovation has been the launch of the Ridley Awards (*see p. 4 opposite*). It's a completely new way for us to do training online. The aim of the Awards is to help our students become more confident in sharing the gospel. We don't tell our students how to do ministry, rather we encourage them to think for themselves, and build confidence in what they are doing and in the decisions they are making. Our students develop ideas in the contexts they are working in; they learn from what has



**ROBIN BARDEN**  
Director of Innovation at Ridley Hall

gone before, but also to develop their own approach to ministry.

**Q: The first Ridley Award focuses on sports ministry. Why did you pick this aspect of ministry to start with?**

We chose sports ministry because practitioners in this area were asking us to fill a gap between resources that can be downloaded from the internet, and formal training that requires a substantial commitment of time and resources.

**Q: So your approach focuses on listening to the needs of the Church rather than just thinking up ideas yourself?**

That's right. The ideas I am working with are not just my own. I look for needs that are being expressed by stakeholders from across the Church. When I hear of a need from different sources, I start to think about how to develop a solution to meet it. The whole process, from a need and an idea to a solution, may take years of effort, time and commitment from external partners and from colleagues within the college.



## Leading from the Second Chair

**In a recent series on Leadership, the Revd Andrew Appiah (Ry. 2017–19), discussed some of the challenges and joys of being a curate. What follows is an extract of some of the wisdom and advice he shared.**

I think it's a joy and a delight to sit in the second chair and to know that the buck doesn't stop with you—you're not the final decision taker. But, of course, the parishioners don't always understand that. And so, they come to you, needing an answer to this, or some direction with that—and sometimes you can help, but other times you need to realise that it's healthy to always remember you aren't the incumbent; you are the curate.

And you're there in the second chair to hold those tensions. So, if one parishioner comes to you complaining about another, you need to hold that gently and kindly and make sure you are not feeding into that, that your response to that is not aggravating things, is not stirring things up. Hold it in love and gentleness, perhaps discuss it with your incumbent, rather than thinking that you need to respond.

You don't have to say something in every situation; there are some things we need to just hold. And, for me, some of that maturity came from my learning at Ridley, because in the community

sometimes we find tensions in our conversations and between people, but you don't always rush into things and respond each and every time. Sometimes it's better to hold things together and channel it properly.

So, for curates like me, these are some of the real issues on the ground, the practical issues that we need to deal with. By God's grace we will have the wisdom to deal with these things, but at the same time I think we need to consciously remind ourselves we are curates, and not get ourselves trapped in unhealthy conversations.

**As you read the following pages, we invite you to join Andrew in his closing prayer for our leavers:**

So let us pray. Lord Jesus, we thank you for all that you are doing in your world. We thank you that we on our own can do nothing, but with you we can do all things.

We pray for all those who are coming into curacy, and those looking for next steps in their life or in their ministry or vocation; we pray that by the power of your Holy Spirit you will grant to us peace, calm, love, and the openness that we need to embrace you in whatever way you are speaking to us—in whatever way you are speaking in our vocation and in our lives.

Thank you that you are a loving God, and that you who have called us will equip us to do all that you have called us to do. May your name be praised in earth and in heaven. We pray through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

## EMBER LIST 2021

We invite you to pray for our 2021 leavers, and their families, as they begin their future ministries, lay and ordained.



### **SAM BANNER**

**Formerly:** Ministry Trainee and Youth Pastor

**Curacy:** St Michael's Chester Square, Two Cities (Diocese of London)

I have loved my time at Ridley: the people; the beautiful surroundings, Grantchester Meadows and the River Cam on our doorstep; studying theology with the Div Fac and Common Awards; and awesome placements and travel. My three years here have been a fantastic and formational blessing, which I will treasure in my ordained ministry, back in London and beyond.



### **AMY BLAND**

**Formerly:** Blackpool Ministry Experience

**Curacy:** Euxton Parish Church (Diocese of Blackburn)

I've loved Ridley and am grateful for all the people who have invested time in me here. I will cherish the memories of being in Ridley for the whole of lockdown, having the run of the place over the summer, and making some great friends. I leave excited for what God has in store next.



### **LEX & RHIANNON BRADLEY-STOW**

**Formerly:** Assistant School Chaplain

**Curacy:** Cherwell Valley Benefice (Diocese of Oxford)

We have really enjoyed our time at Ridley. I have learnt a huge amount about priestly vocation, which I know I will keep reflecting on over my time in ministry. We have so valued the community of friends and support that Ridley has given us.



### **BEN BRADY**

**Formerly:** Diocesan Pastoral Assistant

**Curacy:** St Andrew's Over Hulton & St Bede Morris Green, Bolton (Diocese of Manchester)

My time at Ridley has been an extraordinary experience. It has brought some of the highest of highs and equally the lowest of lows. To be able to be a part of the community has been a blessing, and as I move on to pastures new I will be able to put what Ridley has taught me into practice.



### **CALUM & CAROLYN BURKE; NIAMH & RORY**

**Formerly:** Strategic Funding Manager

**Curacy:** Top Church Dudley (Diocese of Worcester), with additional

responsibilities in the Gulf

I feel very blessed to have been given the gift of three years at Ridley. I've valued having the time to reflect more deeply on my own faith and calling. I have also benefited from having the time to study Islam more seriously, which will be essential for ministry.



### **BECS & ANTHONY CHALLIS; FREDDIE**

**Formerly:** IT Projects Manager

**Curacy:** Hatfield Heath, Hatfield Broad Oak, Sheering, Bush End, Little & Great Hallingbury (Six

Villages MMU) (Chelmsford Diocese)

I will always be grateful for the inspirational teaching and firm foundation of theological education received whilst at Ridley. Having opportunities to explore creative ways of praying and learning how to be the 'me' that God called, sets me in a good position to play an active part in God's mission in the world.

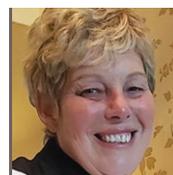


### **HAZEL DAVIS**

**Formerly:** CYM Youth Worker

**Curacy:** St Chads Burton & St Mary's Stretton (Diocese of Lichfield)

I am grateful for the wonderful opportunity I had to train at Ridley Hall. What a blessing it has been learning and growing in such a supportive and caring community. I have been greatly challenged, encouraged, and affirmed in my calling. I look forward to ministering in my curacy, knowing that my experience at Ridley has given me a wise and steady foundation in all that God has for me to do there and beyond.



### **YVONNE & SIMON DESROCHES**

**Formerly:** Church Army commissioned Evangelist

**Curacy:** Assistant Pioneer Curate, Emmanuel Group of Churches,

Northampton (Diocese of Peterborough)

Some of my most treasured and precious moments of my time at Ridley Hall, are as follows: the gift of friendships made, laughter, good teaching in a wonderful learning environment, excellent food from Howie and of course being given time and space to encounter God in new, extraordinary ways. Thank you all for making this possible.



**LUKE & PHILIPPA DOBSON;** BETH, REUBEN & ELIJAH  
**Formerly:** *Mission Enabler*  
**Curacy:** *Holy Trinity Leicester (Diocese of Leicester)*

It's been such a privilege to study at Ridley. I know I and my ministry have been deeply formed by being here, learning from all the staff and students alike. I am sad to leave, but confident in God and where he is calling me because of the training I have experienced.



**STEPHEN DOVE**  
**Formerly:** *Lay Pioneer*  
**Curacy:** *St Mary & St Michael, Trumpington (Diocese of Ely)*

I thought coming to Ridley that I would be a square peg being forced into a round hole, but I've found that there is space for all shapes and sizes of pegs/holes and this is what makes Ridley the wonderfully welcoming and eclectic community I now treasure.



**JEFF & KIM GOLDING;** PHOEBE & JESSE  
**Formerly:** *Social media and website marketing for an online pen specialist*  
**Curacy:** *St Werburgh's Derby (Diocese of Derby)*

Being at Ridley Hall and having the space to learn, pray and laugh with friends has been an amazing privilege. Not only have I been stretched both academically and spiritually but the friendships I have gained will sustain me for years to come!



**JONATHAN & LYDIE HUFF**  
**Formerly:** *Postgraduate researcher in music*  
**Curacy:** *Holy Trinity South Woodford (Chelmsford Diocese)*

Ridley has been an incredible gift and an exciting adventure exploring and nurturing all that God has called me to. To be part of a family exploring together what it means to follow Jesus by serving his people has been an enormous blessing! I am grateful for all the fun, laughter and joy!



**LOTTIE JONES**  
**Formerly:** *Youth & Children's Pastor*  
**Curacy:** *St Barnabas Alwoodley & St Paul's Shadwell (Diocese of Leeds)*

I have had such a wonderful time at Ridley, and have made some incredible friends. I have been encouraged, challenged and formed, in the dining hall, the lecture hall and on the benches by the chapel, and I feel ready for the next part of the journey.



**ANNE-MARIE & CRAIG MARSH;** CHERISH & THOMAS  
**Formerly:** *Civil Servant and BA honors student, studying Contextual Ministry & Practical Theology*

**Curacy:** *St John the Baptist Hillmorton and St Gabriel's Houlton (Diocese of Coventry)*  
 I have been so grateful for my training at Ridley, even in the pandemic. The practical theology, academic learning and ministerial formation have laid firm foundations that I will continue to build on through my ministry. Friendship and community, learning and growing together, along with the rhythm of my prayer life, have helped me grow ever closer to God.



**GILL MUNSON**  
**Formerly:** *Church Operations & Events Co-ordinator, and Representative for Beautiful Gate Lesotho*  
**RLM Specialism:** *Pioneer Ministry*

Ridley has been an unexpected but fantastic opportunity to challenge myself, to grow in faith, to learn so much and to make some amazing friends. It has been a real adventure!



**MIRIN NIEKIRK**  
**Formerly:** *Student Chaplain at CYM Ipswich*  
**RLM Specialism:** *Children's and Family Ministry*  
**Next:** *Chaplain, Woldingham School*

I have loved being part of the Ridley community who have had a huge impact on my personal and spiritual growth. I will miss the real sense of peace and God's presence at Ridley but I'm so excited for my next adventure of being a chaplain at Woldingham Girls School.



**THOMAS OWEN**  
**Formerly:** *Tutor, Regents Theological College*  
**Curacy:** *St Andrew's Sneyd Green, Stoke-On-Trent (Diocese of Lichfield)*

Ridley has allowed me to find a theological centre of belonging; a grounding from which to explore wide and differing perspectives, and an appreciation of the complexities of these discussions. At the same time, crucially, it has taught me how to balance the academic dimensions of theology with practical and spiritual formation. It has been an education I will long be thankful for.

### Ember days: Lifelong Opportunities

Ridley ordinand Charles Cowper asks: What are Ember days, and how might we all benefit from them throughout our lives and ministries? **p. 11**



### **CERI & MIKE PAYNE**

**Formerly:** QC practising company law in barristers' chambers in London

**Curacy:** *St John the Evangelist, Cambridge (Diocese of Ely)*

Two years blessed by Ridley's diverse and supportive community has equipped me for faithfully adventurous leadership in the 21<sup>st</sup>-century Church by deepening my experience of prayer, stretching my intellectual understanding of God and challenging my theological perspectives, transforming my appreciation of God's Word through reading it in Hebrew and Greek, and integrating my evangelical faith within its Anglican heritage.



### **NICHOLAS & SARAH PUCENOT; NYAH-ROSE & SAVANNAH**

**Formerly:** Youth Worker

**Curacy:** *St Michael and All Angels Westcliff (Chelmsford Diocese)*

I am truly going to miss the people at Ridley. It has been a wonderful two years and I have learnt so much. I am now looking forward to serving and putting what I learnt into action.



### **INGRID RANDALL**

**Formerly:** Part of the team in Huntingdon Parish

**RLM Specialism:** Pioneer Ministry

**Next:** *I hope to be licensed as an Ely Diocese (Pioneer) LLM In October*

*and will serve in Huntingdon.*

My Ridley Lay Ministry studies have been truly formational and I've learned more in two years than I could ever have imagined. Thank you to the RLM crew and to everyone who has supported us. I will miss you all.



### **ADAM & ANN ROEBUCK; ARTHUR**

**Formerly:** Actuarial consultant

**Curacy:** *All Saints, Ilkley (Diocese of Leeds)*

I have treasured my time at Ridley, the many things I have learned and the friends I have made. Although it will be sad to leave, I am very excited to start my curacy, put the theory into practice and see what God will do with me and my family in Ilkley.



### **BEN & KATE ROGERS**

**Formerly:** Secondary school French teacher

**Curacy:** *Cromer Parish Church (Diocese of Norwich)*

I've had such a good time at Ridley; residential training has given me the space to learn and grow. I've really enjoyed the variety of modules and made some great friends along the way.



### **ANDY & HOLLY RUFFHEAD**

**Formerly:** Personal Assistant

**Curacy:** *St Paul's, Leamington Spa (Diocese of Coventry)*

My three years at Ridley Hall have been a gift in so many ways – an adventure with the Lord, going deeper in prayer, study, mission, community, and of course croquet! I feel I am going into curacy from a place of strength and trust in God's calling and provision.



### **KIM SEWELL**

**Formerly:** Children's & Youth Worker

**RLM Specialism:** Youth Ministry

As I trained as a Licensed Lay Minister, sponsored by Ely Diocese, my work expanded from the Parish of Alconbury to include the wider community of the Benefice. I have learnt, laughed and cried with my classmates through many theological challenges. The key learning is to have the boldness to share the gospel in a contemporary language, and beyond the restraints of a church building.



### **BECKY SHANNON**

**Formerly:** Student in health and social care

**Studied with:** Ridley London

**Next:** *I will be the youth and children's worker at The Engine*

*Room in Tottenham Hale until the end of 2021. After that I will see where God sends me.*

Being a part of Ridley has helped me grow in my faith and understanding of not only myself but my understanding of Christianity. I look forward to building on that knowledge in my future ministry.



### **SAMANTHA SIEBER**

**Curacy:** *St Germain's Church*

*Edgbaston (Diocese of Birmingham)*

Dear Ridley – thanks so much for all you have taught me and for how you have supported me and looked after me!



### **CHARLIE SMITH**

**Formerly:** Academic Librarian

**Curacy:** *Richmond Team Ministry (Diocese of Southwark)*

Excited to go and minister in a new

setting, and help to lead in a whole variety of styles of worship. And to continue to use my creative gifts in worship, as Gail and Ian have encouraged us to do.



### EMILY SPENCER

**Formerly:** Teacher

**Curacy:** Knowle Parish Church (Diocese of Birmingham)

I've learnt so much about God, myself and others at Ridley. It has been challenging, but very rich. I've made some really great friends here. I feel Ridley has prepared me very well for what's to come next. I leave with a sense of gratitude and excitement for curacy.



### DIMITRI & JULIA THEULINGS

**Formerly:** Software Developer

**Curacy:** Ipswich St Matthew with Triangle and All Saints (Diocese of St Edmundsbury & Ipswich)

It has been a wonderful privilege to be part of the Ridley community this year, spending time with God, learning and being shaped by him, and getting to know everyone online and in person. We can't think of a better way to have navigated through these strange times and we look forward to the future, trusting in God's great goodness.



### EMILY & PETER TIDBALL; AMY, TOM & JAMES

**Formerly:** Interfaith charity co-ordinator

**Curacy:** St Peter's Church, Morley (Diocese of Leeds)

I've really appreciated having the support of my pastoral group and staircase colleagues, even though lockdown has made this a different experience over the last few months. I've also enjoyed learning how to lead worship online and plan to take this into my future ministry to reach people who cannot get to church services.



### WILL TRIFFITT

**Formerly:** New Wine Discipleship Year Student

**RLM Specialism:** Children's and Family Ministry

**Next:** Ministry Support and New

Wine Discipleship Year Facilitator at St Mary's Church, Longfleet (SML) Poole

I've loved being a part of the Ridley Hall community over the last three years. Being in the RLM stream, it's looked slightly different, but I've met incredible people and have loved coming up to Cambridge too! Ridley is such a special place!



### FUNMILAYO VAUGHAN

**Formerly:** Paralegal Business Manager, Crown Prosecution service

**Curacy:** Great Baddow Team Ministry (Chelmsford Diocese)

I have appreciated learning at Ridley as part of my formation. This is not limited to academics but also the wisdom of lecturers, fellow ordinands, staff on site, and my church attachment supervisor. I look forward to God's unfolding plans for the next chapter of my life.



### JESS WALKER

**Formerly:** Youth group volunteer

**RLM Specialism:** Youth Ministry

**Next:** My current church has offered me a job from July to December.

When December comes around, I may continue, or I may not. After speaking to a lot of people in my year it seems that almost everyone is unsure. The fact that we're all a little bit uncertain makes the next step a bit less intimidating.



### KIRSTY & DAN WHITE

**Formerly:** Young Adult Minister

**Curacy:** St Barnabas Church, Penny Lane (Diocese of Liverpool)

I have really appreciated being part of a joyful, fun, prayerful community where people encourage, challenge and affirm each other well. Making friends from so many different traditions and backgrounds has been enriching and challenging. I have been encouraged to recapture my passion for creative worship (esp. music and poetry) and I'm excited to see how God might use that in curacy.



### HANNAH WILKINSON

**RLM Specialism:** Youth Ministry

I've learnt so much during my time at Ridley, about theology, church, Jesus and what it looks like to really love people. I'm not the same person I was three years ago. My placement has given me so many opportunities to learn and grow and explore my passion for youth work and young people. I'm excited for whatever the future holds.



### SUSAN & ROBERT WRIGHT; ANNA & ALEXANDER

**Formerly:** Parish Assistant

**Curacy:** Herne Hill Parish (Southwark)

I have had a first-class education and formation experience at Ridley, I've made lasting friendships, and I feel equipped to begin curacy. But the most valuable thing I leave with is a profound awareness of my dependence on God and of his faithfulness to me.

---

## Ember days – lifelong opportunities for preparation

---

The Ember days are days set aside at the beginning of four liturgical seasons.

Traditionally they are days of fasting, abstinence and almsgiving. Their purpose is to provide a period of preparation for the ordaining of clergy, to thank God for the gifts of nature, to teach us to make use of them in moderation, and to provide alms to assist the needy.

The scriptural basis for this time is taken from the Acts of the Apostles: ‘As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, “Now separate to me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them”’ (Acts 13:2).

One might consider what we are all undertaking as ordinands in our formation as a long Embertide, a long time of prayer and preparation to ready us for our ordination and sacred ministry. We spend time listening to the Holy Spirit, discerning what is the work to which we are called.

At the end of the last Embertide, many in our community were ordained. During Embertide they will have gone on retreat with ordinands from across the diocese – days for a time of prayer

and final preparation before they are ordained. The season of their lives spent at Ridley will pass, and the next will come.

But, like the seasonal Ember days, after we leave theological college we will all have to return to our preparation. There are four seasons spread throughout the year which cause us to reconsider and reflect on what the work of sacred ministry is. Likewise, we will need to return to what we have learned in this time, the things we have been given in this period of preparation.

Whether you are still training, heading into curacy or been ministering for many years, I’d recommend looking up the prayers for Embertide (to be found both in Common Worship and the BCP). Sit with them and consider what you have been given, how best to treasure and use those things, and how best to return to them in later life and ministry.

Ask those approaching ordination how you might best pray and fast for them over the next few months. Consider those you know who are beginning or undergoing the discernment process, and pray for them. And take a moment to pray for those of us heading into another year as part of the Ridley community, for what we are all doing in this place and in this time.

**CHARLES COWPER**  
Second-year ordinand

## Ridley Online: the dedicated online one-year Certificate in Theology, Ministry & Mission

**Ridley Online** supports our core aim of providing accessible, in-depth and comprehensive training in Theology, Ministry and Mission for all God’s people. Visit our website to find out more. Our next Ridley Online open evening (via Zoom) will be held on Monday October 18<sup>th</sup> 2021, for September 2022 applications.

## Philip Jenson retires

AS HE BEGINS HIS RETIREMENT, RIDLEY'S OLD TESTAMENT TUTOR, THE REVD DR PHILIP JENSON, LOOKS BACK OVER HIS YEARS AT THE COLLEGE.

### Is there a better job in the Church of England than being a tutor at Ridley and teaching the Old Testament?

It might be a personal opinion, but I leave after fifteen years with a 'no' as my answer. Over the years I have seen how students arrive knowing less and less about the Bible of Jesus. Yet the Old Testament is foundational to all we know about God, expressed in a wonderful range of styles. Here we find terrific, full-blooded narratives of flawed lives, gracious instruction on how to live well (the Law), searing criticisms of injustice along with hope for the future (the Prophets), poetry plumbing the depths and the heights (the Psalms), and aspirational wisdom (Proverbs). If I have been able to give students a glimpse of these riches, then my teaching has not been in vain.

Without the Old Testament it is also impossible to understand the New. I have particularly valued the MA module I teach on Biblical Theology. We can only begin to understand Jesus Christ in the context of the God who created the world and who, through calling a people, begins a strange and costly story of redemption. My chief worry is that the corporate and covenantal character of this story is being overwhelmed by

the emphasis on the individual and the interior in our secular age.

Of course, there is a great deal more to being a tutor than teaching. There is the unglamorous but absolutely essential need for efficient and creative administration, and I have been involved in this since I arrived. Most recently I have been MA Course Director and Chair of the Common Awards Exam Board. Administration can be frustrating and tedious, but also rewarding in helping students be clear about what and how they learn. I was also appointed college librarian when I arrived, and never managed to pass that on. Although others do all the real work, the development of the new library in the basement has been a memorable end to my custodianship.

Most satisfying, though, has been the personal relationships that are possible in a residential college. It has been a privilege to belong to an amazingly gifted staff team. But, above all, I have valued seeing how men and women grow during their time at college. Those who arrive confused and uncertain leave more or less transformed and ready to serve the Church with zeal and some useful knowledge. My hope is that this will continue to be at the heart of all that Ridley plans, practices and teaches.

REVD DR PHILIP JENSON



## Old Testament Lectionary notes to your inbox

**L**ectionary Notes from Christie is an e-newsletter for anyone who knows a little bit about the Hebrew Bible and wants to know more.

Christie Gilfeather is a Ridley ordinand and PhD student at the University of Cambridge researching the figure of the widow.

Every other week she pens something about texts that have

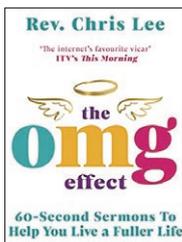
appeared in the Church of England lectionary, to help in your reading and interpreting of the Hebrew Bible. She shares insights from biblical studies in a straightforward way, highlighting particular things of interest along the way.

So whether you need a quick and to-the-point guide to the key things to know about the strange and sometimes problematic prophet of Ezekiel, or are wondering what is the point of the Book of Proverbs, we highly commend signing up.

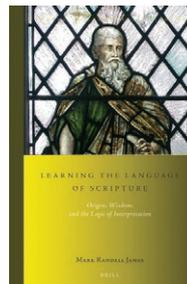
To get Christie's Lectionary Notes sent directly to your inbox, or to read past issues, go to:

<https://christiegilfeather.substack.com>

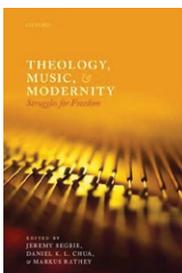
## GETTING THE WORD OUT: Alumni publications



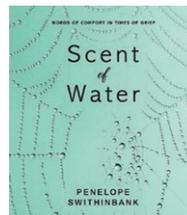
**Chris Lee**, *The OMG Effect: 60-Second Sermons to Help You Live a Fuller Life* (London: Century, 2020)



**Mark Randall James**, *Learning the Language of Scripture: Origen, Wisdom, and the Logic of Interpretation* (Leiden: Brill, 2021)



**Jeremy Begbie**, Daniel K. L. Chua and Markus Rathey (eds), *Theology, Music and Modernity: Struggles for Freedom* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021)



**Penelope Swithinbank**, *The Scent of Water: Words of Comfort in Times of Grief* (Welwyn Garden City: Sarah Grace Publishing, 2021)

Are you a Ridleian with a book or journal article in the pipeline for the coming year? Tag us in on social media when it's published or email the editor Dona McCullagh on [dam45@cam.ac.uk](mailto:dam45@cam.ac.uk) and we'll include it in next year's magazine.



ABOVE, RIGHT & FRONT COVER: Digital paintings by Rick Nelms. Visit [www.underthethinkingtree.com/ricks-paintings](http://www.underthethinkingtree.com/ricks-paintings)

## Progress towards accessibility for all

The Easter Term of 2021 marked the completion of our accessibility building project. Our vision for this project goes back to 2019 when we conceived a plan for a development with two broad objectives.

Firstly, we wanted to make some of the most important spaces in the college more accessible to everyone. Key to achieving this objective was making our library more accessible. The old library had necessitated climbing two flights of steep, narrow stairs. By contrast the new basement library is accessible for all using stairs or lift (shown above).

We also installed a second platform lift and internal stair lift for access to the dining hall and common room, as well as handrails and ramps for access to the college archway, the Lecture Hall, the Lodge Offices, and staircase 'C'.

Our second objective was to create new good quality accommodation that

we can rent to students, staff or other tenants with a view to supporting and sustaining the financial position of the college for the future.

Building work on the project started in September 2020 and completed on time and on budget, despite the challenges of the pandemic.

For a moving insight into what accessibility means, we encourage you to read the meditative piece (p.15 opposite) by artist Dr Rick Nelms, whose wheelchair was previously unable to negotiate the Victorian stepped entranceways. He describes his visit this summer to the new library as a 'Capernaum' experience, the platform lift lowering him to the written Word as the paralytic was lowered through the roof to the Word made flesh. It is a meditation that will continue to inspire us as we press forward on the journey of accessibility for all.

Formal completion of the building project will be marked by an official blessing and opening of the library in October by former ordinand the Revd Yvonne Desroches, and the Right Revd Stephen Conway, the Bishop of Ely.



### Capernaum has come to Ridley Hall

**We invited Dr Rick Nelms, who uses a power wheelchair, to bench test the newly installed ramps and lifts (see p. 14 opposite). A plant biologist, since his early retirement Rick has become a digital artist. No longer able to hold a paintbrush, he uses an oversized mouse he calls the 'googly-eyed rat' to create vivid paintings. We are grateful to him for sharing here his paintings and meditations on the visit.**

“ Cycling up Sidgwick Avenue, early 1990s, overwhelming first impression; yet another Cambridge college enclosure, stuffed to bursting with angular buildings of no great architectural merit. Fast forward some years. Parking in Newnham Walk; red brick walls, impenetrable shrubbery; an open gate; a glance; a pause; an unsuspected vista. Drowning in a sea of parked cars and informal greenery; Victorian mock Tudor in red brick, formality, symmetry, coherence, strangely appealing. I wondered what was within.

Fast forward more years. From my own village church, I knew Ridley Hall, producer of a succession of strong ordinands, each making a real impact in their brief placements. Characteristically autistic, I did not join the dots. Fast forward more years. I am in a powerchair, retired early, learning to live with slow-burning Motor Neurone Disease, and Sue is training to be a Licensed Lay Minister.

We visit Ridley Hall so Sue can use the library. I can't get in. There are steps everywhere. However, some dots are joined. Outside, I ponder. I don't like Victorian mock Tudor red-brick buildings much. I like ones I can't get into even less. I wondered what was within.

Come the pandemic; Sue is leading an online team church. New friends, new fellowship, new prayer partners, new technical advisors, new constructive critics. A passing comment on accessibility improvements at Ridley Hall, vivid recollection, interest piqued. The Holy Spirit guides. Five photos. Five paintings. Inspired. I haven't seen within but I have painted it.

Architect's drawings online and photos from Twitter. Inspired. Bookshelves graduated from monochrome to colour. Inspired. A zip file of photos. Inspired. Photos zipped together. New perspectives. Inspired. Wildflowers, paving slabs, lifts, Victorian mock Tudor red-brick; integrated, harmonious, beautiful. And a question—would I test it all? Absolutely! Now I know what is within.

I have painted it. I have seen it. I have touched it. Capernaum has come to Ridley Hall. In the library is the Word. In my powerchair I have been lowered through the roof. In the library is indeed the Word. He came not to condemn the world, but to save the world through the forgiveness of sins. And Jesus said to them 'As the Father sent me, so I send you.' Ridley Hall, a beacon of love and of light for all who are called, all, without partiality.”

**M**irin Niekirk, who graduated this summer, talks about life as a Ridley Lay Ministry (RLM) student.

Mirin studied for her BA in Theology, Ministry and Mission through our six teaching weeks a year in Cambridge, and applied the learning in her ministry placement as a primary school chaplain.

**Q: What did you do in your children's ministry role?**

I was a student chaplain in two primary schools with children aged 4–11 years old, where I reached 630 students and 120 staff each week. I provided pastoral care for staff and students through one-to-ones, coaching and mentoring, and encouraged school communities to explore faith and spirituality through activities such as responding to big questions, reflective spaces, and assemblies. I was being a positive Christian presence to whole school communities.

**Q: How did studying at Ridley change your ministry?**

Ridley Lay Ministry teaching encouraged me to reflect theologically on the work that I do, to explore my faith in depth and develop a wider understanding of the impact of children's ministry. I developed as a leader through having opportunities to explore what I'm capable of, setting goals of what I would like to achieve, and being able to find my passions through the work that God has called me to do.

**Q: What have been the challenges?**

I have learnt a lot about myself, my faith, children's ministry, and I've grown in confidence, all in the company of supportive and encouraging people in the Ridley community. This has sometimes



been difficult to do as these are pretty life and faith-shaking things to experience, but having the safety of the Ridley community to grow in this way has been such a great experience.

*"Ridley Hall provides the opportunities and the structure to grow in yourself and in your faith in a spiritually healthy way, with support, encouragement...and a whole lot of Jesus along the way."*

**Q: If someone reading this is considering the Ridley Lay Ministry programme, what advice would you give?**

There are many highlights and challenges that come out of studying lay ministry, because it's a time when you are going to grow in yourself and in your faith—and Ridley Hall provides the opportunities and the structure to do this in a spiritually healthy way with support, encouragement, and a whole lot of Jesus along the way.

Email [layministry@ridley.cam.ac.uk](mailto:layministry@ridley.cam.ac.uk) to book into one of our upcoming Tuesday evening RLM open days:

23<sup>rd</sup> November 2021

11<sup>th</sup> January 2022

8<sup>th</sup> March 2022

26<sup>th</sup> April 2022

14<sup>th</sup> June 2022