

# Pondering! “How did we get the unimaginable”?

By the Rev. Janet Eastwood

Quite a few of you will remember that I helped at some Sunday services when St. Stephen’s was waiting for a new vicar. Now, Reverend Keith is the vicar and has asked me to write and tell you how I came to be a priest.

I cannot remember not being part of a church.

When I was 8 years old, we moved from Edenfield in East Lancashire to Crosby, and we joined All Saints’ Church. After leaving school I went to work at George Henry Lee (now known as John Lewis) on a management course becoming a Section Manager and then a Staff Training Manager as we introduced ‘new’ computerised tills. I learned so much in the ten years there.

After a few years, I became restless, trying to find new work but nothing came, until a friend, a new curate, who teasing me said that he thought that I should become a deaconess because of my faith. I talked this over with my parents and spoke to the (late) lovely Frances Briscoe. They could not understand why I had not done this before! Was this the cause of my restlessness?

I talked to my Managing Director who said, *“Just tell me what you are doing”*.

*“I want to become a Deaconess”* I replied

*“Thank heavens”* he said, *“I thought you were pregnant!”*

He supported me all the way through, until I left in early 1985, then I went to Wycliffe Hall in Oxford to attend from September 1985, studying and learning History, The Bible, Faith, and (hated) learning to speak Greek - giving that up as soon as I could!

I was one of only 3 women hoping to become potential deaconesses, whereas the men on our course were working to become deacons prior to becoming priests.

Little did we know that, sometime later, we were going to be amongst the first women allowed to become priests! My unimaginable dream had become imaginable!

*To be continued.....*