

â??Here I am, send meâ??: 11 ordained at St Peterâ??s Cathedral on St Andrewâ??s Day

Eleven people were ordained or received into holy orders at St Peterâ??s Cathedral on Saturday 28 November, as the Diocese of Adelaide marked the Feast of St Andrew, Apostle and Martyr â?? the fisherman who left his nets to follow Jesus.

The Most Reverend Dr Bradly Billings, Archbishop of Adelaide, ordained Elizabeth Aguto, Martha Ajith, Abraham Biar, Cooper Davis, Abraham Garang, Jonathan Hamer, Susan McLeod, Virginia Shek and Anna Zweck to the Order of Deacons. He recognised the diaconal orders of the Revâ??d Monica Mayen, who was ordained deacon in South Sudan in 2021, and ordained the Revâ??d Benjamin Falcon to the Order of Priests.

The new deacons and priest with Archbishop Bradly Billings and visiting bishops are pictured on the steps of St Peterâ??s Cathedral, above.



The procession enters St Peterâ??s Cathedral at the start of the service.

A question no one had asked

The Revâ??d Jude Benton, Coordinator of Ministry Discernment and Formation at St Barnabas College, began her sermon with a question: would the congregation like to have beautiful feet?



The Revâ??d Jude Benton

She described the long road the candidates had travelled to reach the Cathedral â?? psychometric assessments, meetings with examining chaplains, reports from lay people and clergy, assignments, exams, interviews and written reflections on their readiness. She thanked everyone who had contributed to that discernment and formation.

â??The process has asked them many questions, yet never once have I considered to ask about the beauty of their feet,â?• she said.

The line comes from Paulâ??s letter to the Romans, quoting Isaiah: â??How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news.â?• It is not about pedicures, she said, but about faith that is lived out in the body â?? active, audible, peaceful and willing to go.

â??The most beautiful feet may well be covered in the dust of a rural setting, scuffed by kicking a ball in youth ministry, painful from walking the corridors and offering care in hospitals, calloused from a lifetime of prayer and service.â?•



A full Cathedral listens to the sermon.

â??Today we have the privilege of seeing 11 remarkable people put their hands up in a unique way, and say, â??Here I am, send me.'â?•

But the task of discipleship belonged to all believers, she said. â??Whether our feet are clad in gumboots or sport shoes, polished leather or sandals, barefoot or in a wheelchair, we are called to live out our faith.â?•



The candidates stand before Archbishop Bradly Billings

Long journeys to this day

The new clergy bring years of ministry with them.

A new priest

The Revâ??d Ben Falcon was ordained a Distinctive Deacon in 2022, but more recently sensed God calling him to priestly ministry. He works full-time as Manager, Mission and Anglican Community Engagement at AnglicareSA, has been a parishioner at Glenelg and Belair, and serves in an honorary capacity at St Peterâ??s Cathedral. He and his wife Stephanie have two children under five, and he counts fatherhood among his most formative experiences of â??training for ministryâ?•. â??Godâ??s timing is good,â?• he writes.

Ben will continue as Assistant Priest at St. Peterâ??s Cathedral until the end of the January, 2027. Following this, he will take up the position of Curate in Charge (under the Supervision of the Venerable Andrea McDougall) of St. Francisâ??, Clarence Gardens, from February.

From South Sudan

Five of the new clergy have their roots in South Sudan, and several carry stories of war and displacement.



Dinka singers and dancers end the service with song

Abraham Garang was born in Khartoum in 1967. In 1983 conflict forced him from his village and he became one of the Lost Boys of Sudan, reaching a refugee camp in Ethiopia and then Kakuma Refugee Camp in Kenya, where he lived for more than 11 years teaching Dinka language, melodies and the scriptures. Married with seven children, he is Warden at St Catherineâ??s, Elizabeth Downs.

Elizabeth Aguto came to faith at 12. When war came she fled to the bush at 15, where she raised three children without hospital or medicine. Chosen by the church in 1993 to serve as a lay leader in remote areas, she later worked with orphaned children through the Mothersâ?? Union in Kakuma before arriving in Australia in 2004.

The Revâ??d Monica Mayen brings more than 40 years of ministry, including as a verger, assistant matron and Mothersâ?? Union leader. In Kenya and South Sudan she supported widows, orphans and vulnerable families, and she has raised relativesâ?? children in Australia. She was ordained deacon in May 2021 in the Diocese of Akot, in the Episcopal Church of South Sudan. At St Lukeâ??s, Whitmore Square, she leads Saturday prayer services and works for peace and reconciliation within the Sudanese community.

Martha Ajith, who grew up in Bor on the River Nile, served as a lay leader assistant with the Dinka congregation at St Johnâ??s, Salisbury, and chaired its Mothersâ?? Union.

Abraham Biar, born in Jonglei State, was commissioned as an Evangelist in Murray Bridge in 2014 and served in that role for seven years.

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A member of the Dinka Singers and Dancers leads the procession alongside the crucifer.

Many paths

Susan McLeod has spent the past five years as Senior Chaplain for Health, Community and AnglicareSA, after serving as Lay Anglican Chaplain at the Royal Adelaide Hospital and Glenside Health. Married to Bishop Chris McLeod, she will serve as Assistant Curate in the Parish of St Peterâ??s, Glenelg, while continuing as Senior Chaplain.

Jonathan Hamer grew up in Adelaide and was a chorister at the Cathedral. He and his wife Kate, with their three children, are part of the congregation at Barneys, Croydon, and God willing he will plant a new evening service at St Cuthbertâ??s, Prospect, in 2027.

Cooper Davis trained and worked as a fashion designer. â??I had never expected a call to ordained ministry for myself â?? but God knows what I donâ??t!â?• he writes. He will continue as assistant minister in the Parish of Henley and Grange, leading its newer contemporary congregation.

Virginia Shek, originally from Hong Kong, trained in psychology and counselling and spent more than 20 years supporting families and students in mission work overseas. She describes God asking her one central question: â??Are you willing to serve me?â?•

Anna Zweck, lay chaplain at St Peterâ??s College Junior School, grew up in Papua New Guinea, where her father was a missionary, and worked as a musician, music educator and psychotherapeutic practitioner before moving to Australia in 2018. She still performs and writes music.

Their ministry now continues in a new order â?? feet, as the Revâ??d Jude Benton put it, â??ready to go to the places they are calledâ?•.

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