

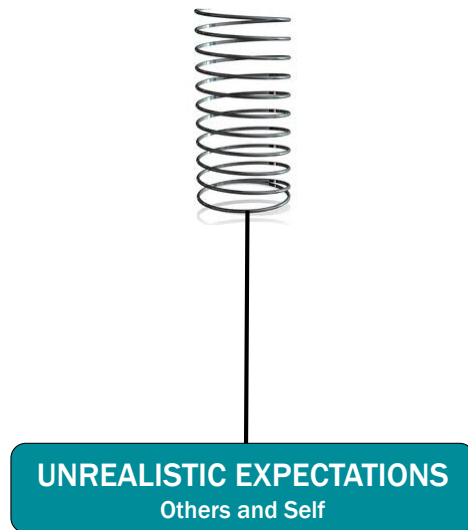


LEADING WELL

DEVELOPING RESILIENCE

SESSION 5
FEBRUARY 2025





Research shows, one of the things that undermines resilience is unrealistic expectations, both others and our own.

RESEARCH INSIGHTS

The **Living Ministry Report Wave 1** 'Effective management of expectations of all parties (e.g. congregations, colleagues, curates and TIs) is important to all aspects of wellbeing, especially at times of transition into new roles.'

'Clergy, particularly in parochial ministry, may struggle to establish boundaries around their work in terms of time, space, thought, activity, relationships and finances. While blurred boundaries may be helpful in some respects for some people, often a lack of capacity to manage them challenges wellbeing across multiple domains.'

Duke Clergy Heath Initiative describes it like this: 'Creating boundaries: flourishing clergy are intentional about setting boundaries around their work lives and their personal lives.'

Oxford Diocese's guide to **Flourishing in Ministry**: 'We encourage all licensed ministers to care for their wellbeing by challenging the culture of expectation of clergy overworking and limitless availability wherever it is encountered.'

'Parishes, benefices and deaneries are encouraged to support the flourishing of their ministers by understanding their ministry as a vocation, not a job, and developing realistic expectations about workload and availability.'

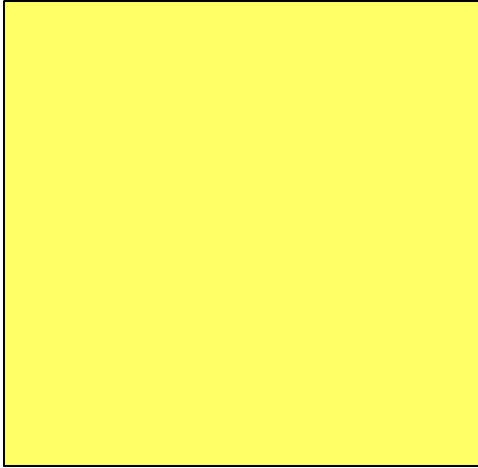
The draft of the **Covenant for Clergy Care Wellbeing**: 'the minister commits to establishing and observing appropriate personal and professional boundaries in pastoral care.'

'A degree of strength and clarity is required in the articulation of mutual expectations which operate in a context of significant, though sometimes subtle, relationships of power.'

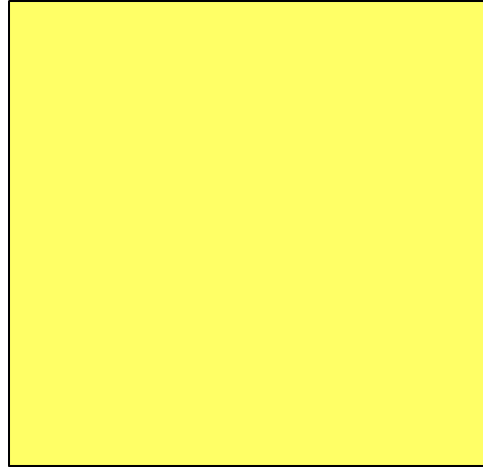
EXERCISE

List on the respective post-it notes the expectations you think others have of you in the following categories. Please write **one expectation only** per post-it.

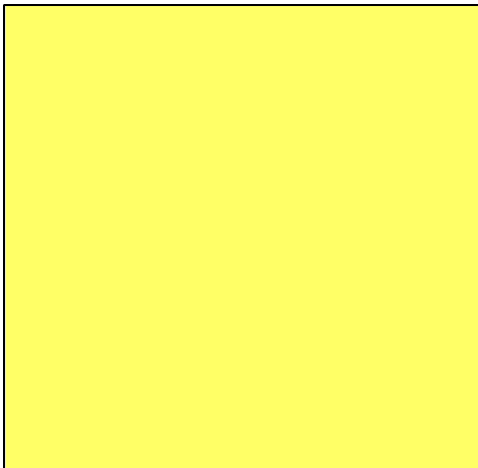
Congregation(s)



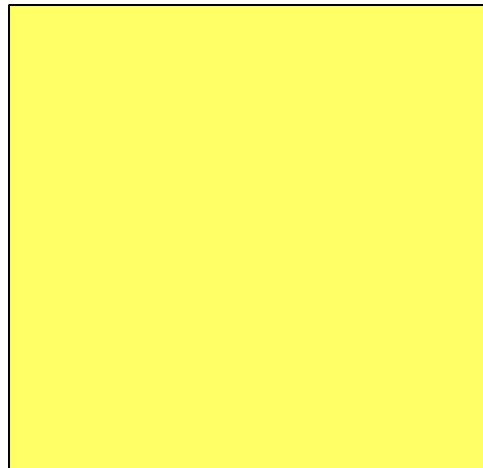
Community



Diocese



Friend/Family



EXERCISE

ACTS 6:1-7

How did the apostles deal with other's expectations in Acts 6:1-7? What can we learn from them?



For Further Reflection

- What expectations do the Scriptures suggest for healthy congregational life?
- What expectations do the Scriptures suggest for pastoral ministry?
- What expectations do you think God has of you?

Priestly Duties: a Poem

by Stewart Henderson

What should a priest be?
All things to all
male, female and genderless

What should a priest be?
Reverent and relaxed
vibrant in youth
assured through the middle years
divine sage when ageing

What should a priest be?
Accessible and incorruptible
abstemious, yet full of celebration
informed but not threateningly so
and far above the passing soufflé of fashion

What should a priest be?
An authority on singleness
Solomon-like on the labyrinth of human sexuality
excellent with young marrieds, old marrieds,
were marrieds, never marrieds, shouldn't have marrieds,
those who live together, those who live apart,
and those who don't live anywhere
respectfully mindful of senior citizens and war veterans
familiar with the ravages of arthritis,
osteoporosis, post natal depression, anorexia,
whooping cough and nits.

What should a priest be?
All round family person,
Counsellor, but not officially because of recent changes in
legislation,
teacher, expositor, confessor, entertainer, juggler,
good with children, and possibly sea lions,
empathetic towards pressure groups.

What should a priest be?
On nodding terms with Freud, Jung, St John of The Cross,
The Scott Report, The Rave Culture, The Internet,
The Lottery, BSE and Anthea Turner,
pre modern, fairly modern, post modern,
and ideally secondary modern
if called to the inner city.

What should a priest be?
Charismatic, if needs must, but quietly so,
evangelical, and thoroughly
meditative, mystical but not New Age
liberal and so open to other voices
traditionalist, reformer and revolutionary
and hopefully not on medication
unless for an old sporting injury.

Note to congregations: If your priest actually fulfils
all of the above, and then enters the pulpit one Sunday
morning wearing nothing but a shower cap, a fez, and
declares

"I'm the King and Queen of Venus, and we shall now sing
the next hymn in Latvian, take your partners, please". -
let it pass – like you and I they too sew
the thin thread of humanity.
Remember Jesus in the Garden
- beside himself.

What does a priest do?
Mostly stays awake at Deanery synods
tries not to annoy the Bishop too much
visits hospices, administers comfort
conducts weddings, christenings,
not necessarily in that order,
takes funerals
consecrates the elderly to the grave
buries children, and babies
feels completely helpless beside
the swaying family of a suicide,
sometimes is murdered at night, alone.

What does a priest do?
Tries to colour in God
uses words to explain miracles
which is like teaching a centipede to sing
but even more difficult.

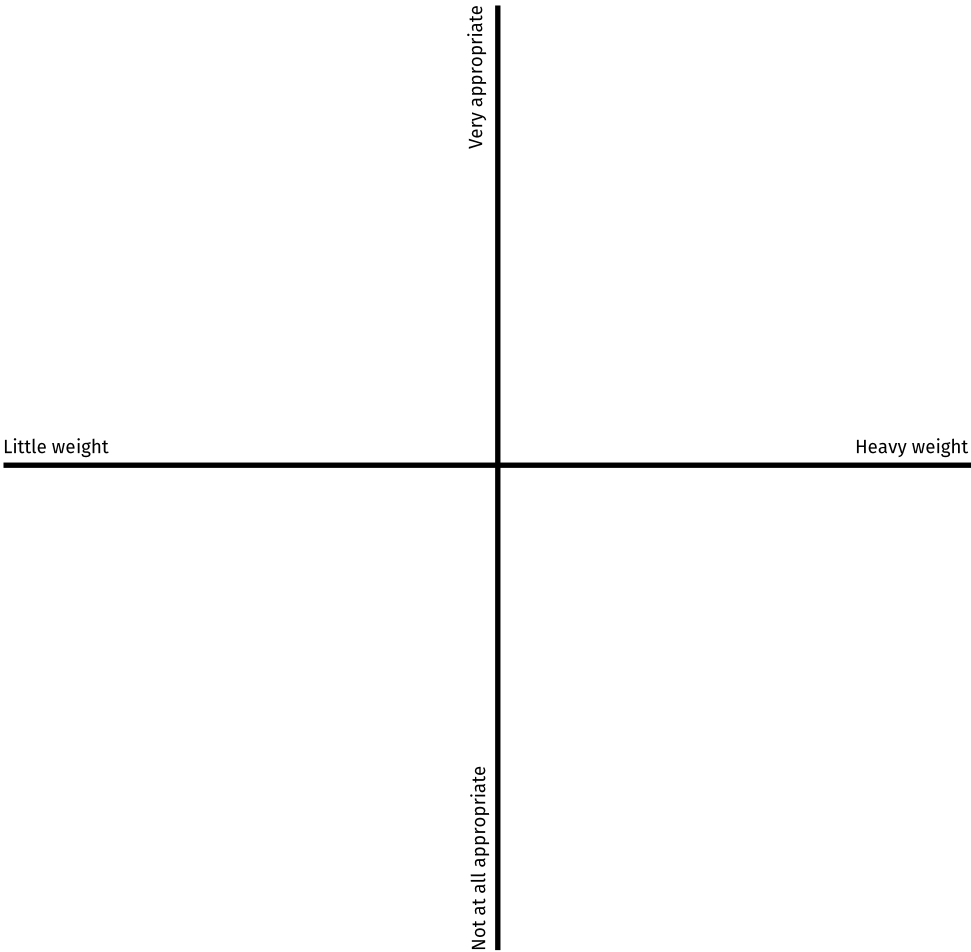
What does a priest do?
Answers the phone
when sometimes they'd rather not,
occasionally errs and strays into tabloid titillation
prays for Her Majesty's Government

What does a priest do?
Tends the flock through time, oil and incense
would secretly like each PCC
to commence with a mud pie making contest
sometimes falls asleep when praying
yearns like us for heart rushing deliverance

What does a priest do?
Has rows with their family
wants to inhale Heaven
stares at bluebells
attempts to convey the mad love of God
would like to ice skate with crocodiles,
and hear the roses when they pray

How should a priest live?
How should we live?
As priests, transformed by the Priest
that death prised open
so that he could be our priest
martyred, diaphanous and matchless priest
What should a priest be?
What should a priest do?
How should a priest live?

How to Work with the Different Quadrants



FOR REFLECTION

I am clear what I want of the clergy. I want them to be people who can by their own happiness and contentment challenge my ideas about status, about success, about money, and so teach me how to live more independently of such drugs. I want them to be people who can dare, as I do not dare, and as few contemporaries dare, to refuse to work flat out (since work is an even more subtle drug than status), to refuse to compete with me in strenuousness.

I want them to be people who are secure enough in the value of what they are doing to have time to read, to sit and think, and who can face the emptiness and possible depression which often attacks people when they do not keep the surface of their mind occupied.

I want them to be people who have faced this kind of loneliness and discovered how fruitful it was, as I want them to be people who can sit still without feeling guilty, and from whom I can learn some kind of tranquillity in a society which has almost lost the art.

An extract from *The Parson's Role Today* by Monica Furlong

EXERCISE

Write your own expectations of yourself (one per post it note only) .

QUICK QUESTIONNAIRE

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10
- 11
- 12
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- 22
- 23
- 24
- 25

TO COMPLETE

Look at the response you have for each question, i.e. Y N S and give that response a score as follows:

Score: **Y** = 1 **S** = ½ **N** = 0

The score for each question then needs to be placed against the question number in the columns below.

Score each mark in the following columns:

COLUMN	ONE		TWO		THREE		FOUR		FIVE	
	Qu	Score	Qu	Score	Qu	Score	Qu	Score	Qu	Score
Question number	3		4		5		1		6	
	7		8		10		2		9	
	14		11		15		13		17	
	16		12		20		19		18	
	21		24		22		23		25	
Total										

Now transfer your total scores for each column to the table below.

COLUMN	DRIVER STATEMENT	SCORE
ONE	Be perfect	
TWO	Please others	
THREE	Hurry up	
FOUR	Be strong	
FIVE	Try harder	

Notes: The 'driver statement' is a summary of learned behaviour. We all have learned behaviour and it influences our actions to a greater or lesser extent, depending upon how powerfully we were given those messages, or how we reacted to or against them.

There are no right or wrong answers, better or worse ways to behave, all we need to be able to do is to understand our behaviour, and sometimes that of others, in order to increase understanding and reduce the inappropriate weights of self-expectation.

Perfectionist – Be Perfect

In the household in which the Perfectionist grew up the values were success, achievement, autonomy or 'being in control' and competition. Along side this were the injunctions: 'Don't play' (it's the winning that counts, not the taking part!); 'don't be spontaneous'; 'don't fail or make mistakes'; and 'don't rely on others' (they might let you down and cause you to fail). The child believes that unless they behave in the approved way then love and acceptance will be withdrawn and certain fears develop.

Their fears:

- Loss of control.
- Not being told what's going on.
- Failure to achieve goals.
- Things not being done right.

STRESS BEHAVIOUR

As stress increases, the person:

- Becomes more and more single minded, seeing only their point of view.
- Becomes more and more controlling.
- Becomes arrogant and aggressive in arguments, will not be able to take account of others' different points of view.
- Becomes goal focused; may discount the people around them.
- Will communicate predominantly in 'thought' language and be very uncomfortable with extreme displays of emotion.

REDUCING STRESS IN SELF

- Be willing to appreciate the different values of others; don't just see your own as valuable.
- List all of your personal values, rank them in terms of importance, then work out how to respond suitably— under stress the tendency is to treat everything as important and so energy is poured into issues that are actually, in themselves, not meaningful.
- Become more conscious of your tendency to be self righteous and to respond in a parental manner, make a point of communicating your feelings.
- Be willing to laugh at yourself.

REDUCING STRESS IN OTHERS OF THIS TYPE

- Reassure others that they are not to blame.
- Be practical; keep agreements with them.
- Never discount their worries.
- If you have a difference of opinion, express your own values with conviction
- If you have to confront them, do it gently, firmly and calmly.
- Show your appreciation of their achievements e.g 'that report was excellent'.
- Give them facts rather than forcing them to talk about their emotions.



People Pleaser – Please Others

The values of the People Pleaser are co-operation, consideration, and the service of others. Alongside this came the injunctions: 'don't be awkward – fit in'; 'don't say no'; and 'don't be you, be who we need you to be'.

Their fears:

- Rejection or criticism.
- Not being liked or included.
- Being thought 'awkward'.
- Conflict.
- Upsetting people.

People Pleasers are very easy to be with or have in a team, but are often pulled this way and that by the different people they are trying to please, finding it very difficult to say 'No'. They are reluctant to challenge wrong ideas and try to anticipate what will please others, without checking first.

STRESS BEHAVIOUR

- People pleasers become more and more emotional under stress and will not respond to requests to be logical. Their language becomes peppered with clichés – they find it difficult to say 'no'.
- They may feel the urge to 'rescue' others. In an emergency, 'taking charge' is often required, but if there isn't an emergency, rescuing others (doing something which hasn't been asked for or doing more than your share) won't help in the long term.
- Every time they do something for someone else, they deprive that person of the opportunity of doing it for themselves and so learning from experience.

REDUCING STRESS IN SELF

- The person with a 'please others' driver feels responsible for others and expects them to reciprocate by taking responsibility for their own well being. In order to break through this, it is important to be willing to accept responsibility for what happens to you and what you do to others.
- Listen carefully to others and respond to what they're actually saying.
- Develop your own autonomy and be prepared to allow others to develop theirs.

REDUCING STRESS IN OTHERS OF THIS TYPE

- Thank them for their help.
- Keep your communication 'superficial' unless you're able/willing to cope with emotions you may uncover.
- Never lose your temper.
- If angry, express your feelings politely.
- If you have to confront them, do it with patience.
- Don't 'reward' clichés – 'reward' authentic communication and reply autonomously.
- Acknowledge them for being the person they are: 'I really enjoy working with you'.
- Pay them lots of compliments.



Activist – Hurry Up

The values of the Activist are energy, speed, activity and efficiency. They are always on the go and their idea of relaxation is to go for a run or work out at the gym. Alongside their values are the injunctions: 'don't stop or be still'; 'don't waste time'; 'don't think or plan'; and 'take short cuts.'

Their fears:

- Having nothing to do.
- Wasting time.
- Time to think.
- Boredom.

An Activist driver is unlikely to have planned their journey, expecting to work things out as they go along, will tend to drive above the speed limit and will go ten miles out of their way to avoid sitting in stationary traffic.

STRESS BEHAVIOUR

- As the stress increases, activity will become more and more frenetic.

REDUCING STRESS IN SELF

- Learn to love life for its own sake so that the fear that life has no meaning becomes less threatened.
- A feeling of greater security will arise if you develop a belief system that supports it.
- Realise that you do not need to earn love by proving how much you do.
- Practise your empathy and listening skills.
- Be on time by not fitting in 'just one more thing' before appointments.
- Make time to express appreciation of people.
- Make lists; create structure and order despite how you feel about them.

REDUCING STRESS IN OTHERS OF THIS TYPE

- Praise their efficiency.
- Enjoy their spontaneity.
- Never be intimidated by their outbursts.
- Don't 'reward' speed and the ability to do several things at once. 'Reward' them for taking time.

Define "activist".



Saviour – Be Strong

The values of a Saviour are strength, courage, reliability and independence. A saviour is often self-sufficient; solitary; reliable; helpful whilst unable to accept help and able to problem solve around difficult personal issues and make 'unpleasant' decisions. They hate admitting any weakness and get overloaded rather than ask for help. The dying words of a saviour are 'I'm fine!' Alongside their values are the injunctions: 'don't be weak or vulnerable'; 'don't show emotion'; 'don't let others down'; and 'don't ask for help'.

Their fears:

- Their own vulnerability or weakness.
- Not coping.
- Letting people down.
- Asking for help.

Under pressure saviours withdraw and stop communicating. They don't want help, because if you were close enough to help you'd also be close enough to see the mess. They prefer to sort themselves out in solitude and only reappear when they have got themselves together.

STRESS BEHAVIOUR

As stress increases, the person:

- Becomes rather withdrawn.
- Can 'withhold' behaviour.
- Can become quieter, reluctant to communicate – it's as if every word has to be dragged out of them, which can end up with the person feeling that they are being interrogated.

REDUCING STRESS IN SELF

- Learn to take as well as to give.
- Acknowledge that you have needs.
- Be willing to express your own needs, occasionally putting them first before those of others.

REDUCING STRESS IN OTHERS OF THIS TYPE

- Praise them for consideration and kindness – they often get taken for granted.
- Give them a surprise treat.
- Do not be effusive.
- Use irony (carefully!) – 'I must say, you're the most unreliable person I know!'
- Don't force them into expressions of vulnerability.
- Don't shout – they may retreat even further.
- If you want something done give them clear instruction.



Striver – Try Harder

The values of a 'Striver' are determination, endurance, and effort. I suspect that whenever, in childhood, they pushed a parental boundary, it moved. Usually they are intense – committed to righting wrongs. They love any new or different task but their initial interest wears off before they finish. In their communication with others they are likely to go off at a tangent and forget their original objective. Alongside their values are the injunctions: 'don't give up or give in'; 'don't succeed or fail' (the job is never over and so cannot be evaluated); and 'don't relax'.

Their fears:

- Success
- Failure
- Stopping

STRESS BEHAVIOUR

- One of the main effects of stress is that much effort goes into trying, but very little is achieved.
- Lots of tasks may be taken on, but something always seems to get in the way of success.
- One of the problems for someone with a 'try hard' driver is that their belief is that they are only acceptable if they try hard. How therefore, will they be able to survive if they have succeeded? It is more important to go on trying that to finish.
- The person tends to move into reactive, sometimes rebellious behaviour.

REDUCING STRESS IN SELF

- Notice how often you use the word 'try' and say instead 'I will' or 'I won't'.
- Before taking on extra work, check that it's realistic for you to do so. If your schedule is full, decide what you will give up in order to take on the new job. Check also that you want to do it, as opposed to believing that you ought to.
- Be willing to distinguish between things that you can and can't change.
- Stop comparing yourself to others.
- Create standards for yourself, not related to other peoples.
- Start now not tomorrow.

REDUCING STRESS IN OTHERS OF THIS TYPE

- If the person is being very competitive, ignore it. Don't get involved in arguments that are focussed on comparisons e.g. 'You don't understand as much as I do'.
- Never let them off what they have committed themselves to do. If you do, the implication is that you don't expect them to succeed.
- Don't 'reward' them for trying. 'Reward' them for finishing.



Over Time...

Over time our self-expectation can become our way of feeling good about ourselves. Whilst there is nothing wrong with having the ability to do things to a high standard, with pleasing others, with having the ability to do a lot of things very quickly, with having the capacity to take on responsibility and with the desire to put in a lot of effort, when these things become our way of making life work they can 'drive' us to unhealthy places.

FOR REFLECTION

- What is your primary driver (we are all a mix of several)?
- What are the positives that come from this driver? What are the negatives?
- How does this impact your expectations of yourself? Describe specific behaviours.
- What is the impact of this driver on others?
- What are the practical steps you can take to minimise the negative impact of the driver?

New Patterns

There are a variety of ways of addressing unhelpful behaviours. When these things are allowed to be in the driving seat they can drive us to unhealthy places. To use rather a quaint image, Jesus is meant to be in the driving seat, and our drivers need to be in the passenger seat. The appropriate Christian response when we have allowed these drivers to be ways of gaining a sense of self-worth is repentance, a turning from self-reliance to reliance on who God has made us and all that he has done for us in Christ on the cross.

NEXT STEPS

- Ask God to show you when you are falling back into self-reliance.
- Find an accountability group.
- Begin to confront some of the fears in prayer – especially the fear of rejection.
- Begin to confront some of the fears in action – delegate, ask for help, stop, say ‘no’, take time to relax.
- Plant God’s word in place of the old messages. Here are some passages it can be helpful to dwell on.

PERFECTIONIST

We cannot be perfect through our own efforts, but only through the redeeming work of Christ.

- Romans 7:18-19
- Colossians 1:22-23
- Proverbs 3:5-6

PEOPLE PLEASER

Whose approval is most important to us – God’s or people’s?

- Galatians 1:10
- 1 Thessalonians 2:14

ACTIVIST

We live in an ‘I want it and I want it now’ age. In the midst of all our rush and hurry God’s word to us is ‘Wait on me’.

- Ecclesiastes 3:1
- Psalm 40:1-2
- Isaiah 30:15

SAVIOUR

Our strength is not based on self-reliance but on God-dependence.

- 2 Corinthians 12:9
- Hosea 10:13-14
- Joshua 1:9

STRIVER

It is not our efforts that will earn us salvation or achieve everything in this life – but Christ living in us.

- Galatians 2:20
- Galatians 3:3
- Psalm 127:1
- Exodus 31:1-6



EXERCISE

REFLECTION ON EXPECTATIONS

- Take a few minutes to look at where you have placed the post-its on the quadrant. On reflection, do any of them need moving (a little or a lot)?
- As you look at your quadrant, what are the weighty expectations (self or other) that add considerable pressure to you at this time? What are their impact? What might be some ways to reduce the weight?
- Are there a particular category (colour) of expectations that predominate in one part of the quadrant? Why might that be the case? How accurate do you think it is?
- Who will you talk with about expectations following this time (spouse, friend, mentor, church wardens, colleagues, PCC, congregation, spiritual director, Archdeacon)? What will be the best way to approach those conversations?

FOR REFLECTION

Pause

The year has started.
365 days lie ahead.
It would be easy to rush into them.
Don't.
Pause.
Intentionally stop.
A quiet place, some time, solitude.
Pause.

Ponder

What is God calling you to this year?
To be?
To do?
To become?
What will faith-filled living look like?
What will faithful leadership look like?
Ponder.

Pray

Submit.
Cry out.
Yearn.
Confess.
For without him we are lost.
And with him we are found.
Pray.

And then...

Lead on.