

Lesley Flecknell – Ordination to the Vocational Diaconate – Sunday 3 May 2026

The Anglican Mission in England (AMiE) rejoices in the ordination of Lesley Flecknell of Holy Trinity Gateshead to the Vocational Diaconate – a moment of deep thanksgiving and gospel clarity. This is a historic and joyful occasion: Lesley is the first person to be ordained within AMiE to this renewed and recognised vocational diaconate, and the first woman to be ordained as a deacon in AMiE. Her calling reflects the rich biblical vision of ministry in which men and women, gifted by the Holy Spirit, are set apart to serve Christ and his church through faithful word ministry, prayer and servant-hearted leadership.

The diaconate is a vital and liberating office within Anglican orders. As the Ordinal makes clear, deacons are ministers of the word, called to read and explain the Scriptures, to teach the faith, to care for the needy and to make Christ's love known in the church and the world. This focused ministry allows men and women alike to flourish in particular areas of gifting – whether among children, young people, women or the wider community – without the broader responsibilities entrusted to presbyters. In this way, the vocational diaconate honours and strengthens ministries that are already bearing fruit, recognising them publicly and prayerfully for the good of Christ's church.

This step is also a confident and positive expression of AMiE's theological convictions. We joyfully affirm the God-given ministries of women and men in the life of the church and we are committed to seeing both flourish. At the same time, we remain persuaded from Scripture that the offices of presbyter and bishop carry particular responsibilities that we reserve for qualified men. The establishment of the vocational diaconate is not a departure from these convictions, nor a movement toward changing them, but rather a strengthening of our existing framework – expanding what we have in a way that is biblically rooted, historically grounded, and pastorally wise.

In a context where discussion can often focus on limitations, this ordination is a clear and hopeful declaration of what women and men are called and enabled to do in Christ. Lesley's ministry stands as an encouragement to many: a visible reminder that the gospel calls all God's people into meaningful, word-centred and prayerful service. As AMiE continues to embrace the gifts Christ has given to his church, we pray that many more will be raised up to serve as vocational deacons, to the glory of God and the building up of his people.

Bishop Tim Davies

Anglican Mission in England

Wednesday 6 May 2026