**Ellie Huggins**

**Although I grew up in a Christian family, it wasn’t until I was fourteen and a couple from a local Bible College came to our church with the task of setting up a youth group that I came to know Jesus as a friend. This was a life transforming time for me both in terms of leading me into a deeper relationship with God as well highlighting for me the impact that obeying God’s call to minister to others can have on people’s lives.**

After completing my Theology degree at Exeter university, I took a year out to travel and discern God’s call and ended up getting an internship working with youth and children in Hertfordshire. It was a rural benefice and definitely not the kind of setting most of my fellow graduates had found themselves in. However, I felt certain this was where God had called me and after a couple of weeks, the youth and children’s pastor announced she was leaving and it continued to become clear why the Lord had led me there; a year long internship turned into a four year post as youth and children’s pastor which was full of joys and challenges and a real insight into full time ministry. During this time, several people asked when I would be ordained, and I was always very quick to dismiss such suggestions and was very good at coming up with excuses! At the start of 2013, I had a strong sense that the Lord was leading me on, and, after much wrestling, I handed my notice in in with no job to go to. Miraculously I ended up getting the most wonderful job as Head of Student Ministries at a church in central Cambridge which enabled me to grow and flourish in the gifts God had given me and further confirm a call to full time ministry. Despite my best attempts to dodge them, the ordination questions continued. In March 2016 I couldn’t hide anymore, and I found myself saying yes to God’s invitation to consider ordination. Thus the discernment process began resulting in a successful BAP in 2018. After deferring for a year due to getting married, I began training in September 2019. In November 2020, we had our first child and I chose to take a year of maternity leave. I returned to complete my studies in September 2021 and was ordained in July 2022 in the Diocese of Bristol. I am currently on maternity leave having had our second child at the start of 2023. What I imagined ministry to look like when I sensed God’s call and what it actually looks like are two very different things! I was single throughout my twenties and the discernment process and God has, and continues to, lead me on a journey of discovering what this call to ministry looks like as a mother and married to someone who is also on the path towards ordination. I don’t know exactly how things will work out but I do know and trust in a God who is faithful and who will never leave nor forsake us as we are obedient to Him.