

## **Growing Leaders Course 2021/22**

*Penny Revitt, St. Matthew's Church, Ipswich*

Why did I do the Growing Leaders Course: I had had 10 years caring for my son who had complex medical needs and wanted to do something just for me away from that caring role and the other roles of wife and working mum. I had been in a variety of roles in St Matthews' since joining in 1992. I had sung in worship bands, led worship, taught in Sunday school, and led homegroups (and some of these I still do)

I have always had a heart to serve and meet the needs of others since I became a Christian at 14. My professional background is Occupational Therapy and I have worked for 32 years in health and Social Care. It's a job I am passionate about, and which is my place of dedicated service.

The course was just a perfect opportunity to have time for me. I did not realise at the time of saying yes how the next year would turn out and how God would use the course to teach me that His resources are always more than any life event that may occur.

What did I enjoy about the Course: It gave me the opportunity and the express permission to concentrate on me and my relationship with God. Yes, it came over what has been the hardest year of my life (and that of my husband), but God has been gracious and loving and I am continually amazed by his loving kindness to me.

What would I give thanks for: Prior to the pandemic, Zoom was something I had never heard of. Although a face-to-face course would have been preferable, I would not have been able to complete the course without Zoom. Only God could use such a platform to fit around the hospital admissions with my son and the multiple bereavements we experienced in our lives in 2021 and 2022.

I am so grateful that even when my son went to dance with his Lord, I knew into whose arms to run. God's arms were the safest place I knew to rest when the storms of life were raging and threatening to overturn our boat. So now rather than the storms threatening the boat, I know a faithful God who has prompted me to step out of the boat in full trust that he knows where we are headed.

I struggled with the sense of call we talked about in the first term of Growing Leaders. I wrestled with what that was for me and especially in relation to my caring role at that time. It was only in January 22 that the lightbulb came on and I realised what the calling was. I continue to unpack it and what it means for the future.

I especially want to thank Rev Ruth Best for her Godly mentorship and encouragement.

So for me The Growing Leaders Course was challenging and transformational and it led me to knowing whose I am, knowing my identity as a daughter of the King, choosing to remain in him and offer my ordinary life for him to use as he guides, and being obedient to my call to encourage others. How that will continue to be worked out in my life I don't know but I do know the ones who does.

Penny Revitt, July 2022.