

Margaret Dixon

It is a privilege to be able to say something about Margaret as those who loved her meet together, I am really sorry that circumstances beyond my control mean that I cannot be with you in person.

Margaret - a good friend, an excellent holiday companion and a fellow minister.

I will start with the holidays. We had 3 major trips, to Italy, Austria and Ireland, and other days out. At each one, and they were all organised tours, Margaret was always to the fore - very much the life and soul of the party. One of my best of the holiday memories was sitting in the magnificent amphitheatre in Verona watching an incredible night time performance of Aida. She really enjoyed that.

She just got on well with everyone on those trips, she could be really funny as I saw a side of her that I might not have done if our friendship only revolved around ministry.

As many of you know Margaret was a very long serving volunteer with the Chaplaincy department at the Norfolk and Norwich hospital. She was a superb visitor and became very popular, patients would ask for her if they were readmitted, and she was very careful to make sure that anyone from your benefice who was admitted was visited. I remember once being asked if "the little lady visitor" was on duty! She cheered patients up, but could also be very perceptive and understanding. This was one of many parts of her life that her gifts remained largely hidden.

Ministry was at the heart of Margaret. It was extremely sad that by the time she was in a position to offer for ordination, the church thought her (and others) to be too old. When they eventually relaxed the age barriers she was again "too old". She valued her role as a Reader and was an outspoken advocate of the work they did, but in her heart she wanted to be and felt called to be a priest.

As someone who knew her ministry very well I can say publicly that not only should she have been, but also how good she would have been. To my mind she was a priest whatever authorities decreed.

She wasn't a saint! All of us know she called a spade a spade, she could be very outspoken if she felt strongly about something and she has more than once put me in my place - firmly.

But she was loyal, kind, extremely generous in giving of her time and most of all, of herself.

For her family, I can tell you that whatever holiday we went on by the time we returned everyone on the trips knew everything about every one of you. There was a hidden pride that maybe - being Margaret, she wasn't going to express verbally, but there was real pride and a deep love for you all.

I will miss her. She taught me a lot about ministry, I will miss her friendship, and her rhubarb!

There is a Bible verse that sums Margaret up, it follows a parable about a master giving his servants assets to use, he eventually returned, some had made an attempt to utilise their gifts, others hadn't bothered but one had used every gift given in the most excellent way, the words the master said to that worker are most appropriate for Margaret today
Well done good and faithful servant.