

July 2025

Archdeacon Karen writes...

Recently I found myself considering a spoil heap hill (a feature of former coal mining areas) as a metaphor of transformation.

A bit of background to explain that!

As Archdeacon of East Derbyshire the part of my role that involves me travelling throughout the eastern side of the county means that I am frequently driving through settlements and landscapes associated with mining and its legacy. The small hill (and it was big enough to be considered as such) I was driving past at the time is now partially wooded and partially farmed. I'm not sure how long it will have taken to get this 'heap' to this point but it will have been a journey that has involved a great deal of attention and care around stability, drainage, probably some form of reclamation of the material and varying levels of plant and species colonisation, planned and otherwise. It is so much more than a single event!

Many of us are on a journey of transformation as followers of Jesus, as our desire to be more like Him and the work of the Holy Spirit in us combine to spur us on in our pilgrimage. That can take us in a myriad of directions as we follow God's call on our lives, but even as we heed that call, Scripture encourages us to 'go on being transformed', to keep on with the journey of discipleship, to go deeper with God. Others of us may be on a journey of enquiry and exploration, uncertain of where that might lead but still with a desire to find out. That journey is of itself transformative.

For some that has led them recently to Ordination as deacon and priest. Please do hold those people in your prayers as they settle into this new phase of their lives.



For a lot of us it is about 'keeping on keeping on' in our own situations, whatever we do, dealing

with all the joys and challenges of life in the context of ongoing inner transformation as we daily know more of God's love for us. Often challenging, sometimes extremely so, never dull!

For me, as retirement approaches, the transforming love of God and my response to that will continue to transform me, although in a different setting.

This is the last Archdeacon's message I will be writing. Thank you for being part of the journey with me over the years, not just as Archdeacon but prior to that as well. My life has been enriched beyond measure by the people of this Diocese, whether part of a worshipping community or not, whether colleague or companion or passing acquaintance and it has been a joy, sometimes in the midst of struggle, to see God's Kingdom bringing transformation in so many different places and lives in such a variety of ways.

Keep on keeping on, nothing is beyond God's redemptive and transforming presence, as the spoil heap illustrates (just a metaphor, don't push it too far as one of my lecturers used to say). May God's blessing be on you and with you as our journeys of transformation continue.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'K Hamblin'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

The Venerable Karen Hamblin
Archdeacon of East Derbyshire