

Rev. Paul Beard
A potted autobiography

I was born in 1955 in West Ham - a very deprived area of East London. My teenage years were spent in the well-heeled suburbs of West London, however, and the transition has given me a well-honed eye (and a thirst) for social justice.

My first degree was in Pure Mathematics and I pursued a career as an Analyst/Programmer for 17 years before being called to the Ministry. I married Wendy when I was 18 and we have two daughters. Lucy, born in 1983, is a Local Preacher currently working as a Care Worker in Surrey. Laura, who arrived in 1985, is a Child Protection Social Worker in London. Wendy is also a Local Preacher and was the Learning and Development Officer for Church and Communities for the London Region of the Methodist Church before her retirement (necessitated by her gracious agreement to move to Belper with me).

I became a Christian just after my 13th birthday in a distinctly Conservative Evangelical setting. I avoided church for ten years during and after University - though I never lost my faith in God - and came back to the URC shortly before Lucy was born. I transferred to Methodism in 1986, becoming accredited as a Local Preacher in 1989 in the Kendal Circuit. In the course of that training, God led me on a substantial journey from my theological roots towards the place I am now. I am still moving.

I was called to the Ministry and started training in Durham in 1993. As a Minister I have served (since 1996) in Scunthorpe, Potters Bar, Morecambe, Woking, St. Neots and Huntingdon and now Belper. The second and third appointments involved the restructuring of the Circuits I was stationed to, involving the creation of new Circuits.

I play the acoustic guitar. I see worship as a participation, rather than a spectator, sport. I love to explore new ways of worshipping, whilst also treasuring our Methodist traditions and history. I don't look good in robes, so I don't wear them. I always seek to exploit new technology where it is appropriate.

I have a lively sense of humour, a florid turn of phrase and a sometimes unorthodox approach to Ministry, so I would ask that you try not to take offense. I see my calling as an opportunity to love God's people. This is never a blind love, and is sometimes a tough love, but be assured I will be doing my utmost to love you all.