

## CLAIRE ALLEN



Dr Claire Allen tells her faith story, as part of [#SpeakOut2016](#) with the Diocese of Truro. Claire has only recently moved to the Liskeard area, drawn naturally by the beauty of Cornwall!

“I have always believed in God despite coming from a nominal Christian family where babies were baptised, weddings were in church and Christmas and Easter might have involved a church visit in “Sunday best” if not interfering too much with lunch or social plans. My interest in God was fuelled by two things even as a small child – my love of nature and creation and my distress at suffering and inequality. I feel I should say something about sin but I only understood that later! I also liked church – a strange thing for a child to like, high Anglican, liturgy, flowers, “otherworldliness” and church music – I tried Sunday school and Youth group a couple of times but never really understood the point of games and noise and preferred the company of adults and hearing the Bible and a sermon. I never really was a proper child!

My desire to go to church came after a Christmas Eve service when I was about twelve and accompanied my mother. The story of Jesus’ birth offered hope in darkness and despair and hope for poverty and I determined that night to go to church regularly and find out more about Jesus and heaven. I challenged my parents on why they only went to church twice a year if they believed in God and if they didn’t why they went at all ... That did not go down well and they never went again whereas I went weekly on my own to the only church within walking distance – an Anglican church. I loved the promises in Revelation that spoke of no more weeping and no more death – the picture of heaven was and is for me very important.

I also determined at the time to become a doctor in order to engage in helping those suffering, and my work and faith have walked hand in hand, sometimes easily and sometimes with difficulty when disease, pain, early death, mental health problems and injustice seem such an affront to the perfect world that God made. I still struggle to understand why God does not intervene when quite clearly he has the power to do so, but I do firmly have faith that when our earthly life is over we will see and know God in heaven and our earthly questions will seem irrelevant.

In the meantime, whilst on earth we can celebrate the beauty of Creation (and moving to Cornwall from city life has been an immense blessing!) and learn to weep with those who weep and rejoice with those who rejoice (Romans 12:15) as well as proclaiming the Good News in actions as well as words.

I know that as a Christian a personal relationship with Jesus is important but in 40 years of being a Christian I still struggle with that idea. He has redeemed me – FACT – but I don’t understand it or feel it. I continue to have faith that it is true and look to Scripture to reveal more. I have an increasing interest in reading scripture in more depth, seeing how the Old and New Testaments relate, and showing us more about God’s character, purposes and relationship with his people.

My life determining verse is “from those to whom much is given, much is expected” (Luke 12:48)

and this motivates me on many fronts having been given health, opportunities and the privilege of a good education and wonderful people to walk with me in life.”