Listening for God, ‘letting go and letting God’.

As a Church Related Community Work Minister (CRCWM) I agreed to follow a ‘Call’, to go wherever God sent me, anywhere in the country, at any time.

For me that has meant leaving our daughters in our family home in Whitworth, Lancashire, when they were 17 and 20 years old.

We moved to a project (Bridging Communities) in Poole, in Dorset for 9 years, my sense of call was very clear, even though I had no understanding of where Poole was, or what sort of project this would be.

This was a very positive experience, in the end, with hindsight, but had very difficult times too. Times when God was challenging me, my family, the project and the churches I served. There were lessons I, and others needed to learn, but God was amazing, putting a collection of people together, developing links, networks and skills which meant that God’s work was done and the project was able to make a difference to the communities this project were involved with.

I thought I, and my husband would stay there for the full ten years, the maximum term available for a CRCWM, but God felt differently!

It was only 8 years into the full 10-year term for a CRCWM when, once again I had a really strong sense of call. This time the call was to a project back in the north west whose CRCWM had moved to another project, after serving in Bolton for 7 years.
In Poole the project steering group had just begun to develop a year-long project with an aim to engender conversations about spirituality, through delivering a series of workshops, which would lead to a commissioned work of art; a series of paintings that were housed in The Spire - a redeveloped Methodist church in the centre of town. It was envisioned that when this piece was unveiled, we would also celebrate all of the work of the Bridging Communities project, whilst sharing the future of the project, although those workshop and conversations were only just beginning. Not the right time, I felt, to hear a call! So, I acted on this sense of call very slowly, which meant it took 18 months for the testing, ratification, moving home and Induction to the Building Bridges project.

Because a colleague had been here in Bolton, before me, a very gifted individual with very different skills than me, I knew we, Dave and I, would only be here for 5 years so for almost a year now I have been looking, listening for a sense of call, which hasn’t come!

There was a moment when I felt I had done all that God had for me to do here. Once again I have been surrounded by individuals, networks, and friends who have ensured God’s work has been achieved, but a moment came when I could not see anything further for me to do, with my gifts, in this place at this time, but of course God knew differently!

I have found this year very hard, not helped by health issues within my family. I have struggled to find peace and not worked actively to forge a future for myself and my family, but there is a well known quote attributed to Woody Allen: ‘If you want to make God laugh, tell him about your plans.’

In the last month I have realised that God still has a use for me here in Bolton, that there are still things God wants this project to achieve, to get things ready for when I leave in April 2020, to ensure that the work continues as the people here have achieved so much over the life of this project, as is shown by our evaluation report.
I still wonder why I am not getting the same strong sense of call as I have in the past, but feel that maybe that is more about me, my own busyness, current lack of stillness and trust? Or even as a trusted colleague said to me in the summer, maybe the right project has not been accredited yet. So, as I have often told myself throughout my life, I need to ‘let go and let God.’ However, I am human and that is much easier to say rather than do, but this last month I have felt more of a sense of peace so maybe something is there, if only I had the patience!