

6<sup>th</sup> June 2026

## Volunteers

**"Volunteers aren't paid, not because they're worthless,  
but because they are priceless."**

*Anonymous*

I attended a "thank you" gathering recently for a national charity with whom I am a volunteer. The charity's work wouldn't be possible, and some of its services wouldn't exist, if it wasn't for volunteers. So it was nice to be the recipient of heartfelt thanks – *and* the amazing quantity of scones and tray-bakes that were on offer. In a "thank you" speech, one of the charity's managers offered a number of quotes about volunteering, including this one, which, like my opening quote today, was attributed to the fountain of wit and wisdom that is "anonymous" ...

*Volunteering is the ultimate exercise in democracy.*

*You vote in elections once a year, but when you volunteer,  
you vote every day about the kind of community you want to live in.*

It's clearly about moving from a position which demands, "What are *they* going to do about it?" – whoever the "they" is perceived to be – to a position of "If I want a better community, what am *I* going to do about it?" That, fundamentally, is the motivation that underpins all volunteering

When I was undergoing speech training as part of my ministerial education, I was in the capable and tender hands of a wonderful speech therapist called Miss Balfour Brown (and no, I was never privy to her first name ...) For a "declamatory" Bible passage (to provide Miss Balfour Brown with a baseline for my preaching abilities) I chose Isaiah 6, the great call of the prophet. "In the year that King Uzziah died ..." and so on. When I got to the wonderful commissioning of this man of God ...

*Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send?  
And who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I. Send me!"*

Miss Balfour Brown stopped me and placed a hand on my chest. "Passion, Mr Gordon!", she declared. "We need passion. From the diaphragm, Mr Gordon. From your very soul. This is the ultimate offering of a life of service. Let passion show what it means ..."

For the passion of *all* who say, "Here I am", I'm happy to add my heartfelt thanks to that which I so much appreciated in my own volunteering.

### **A prayer for today**

*Lord, help me not to say, "Here I am. Please send somebody else ..." Amen*