Show of hands:

- Who was born in *[city name]*?
- Who shares a bedroom?
- Who is older than 60?
- Who is younger than 10?
- Who likes playing football?
- Who likes drawing?
- Who is an identical twin?

Did you know, even identical twins have different fingerprints? They have different patterns in their teeth too. Everyone in this room is unique; there are no two people who look the same, feel the same and enjoy the same things. In fact, everyone in the whole world is unique.

But, most of us are here this morning because we believe in God. We believe that God made each of us, in all our uniqueness. We believe God loves each of us. In fact, God loves every bit of each of us, even the smelly bits! And if you don't believe in God, or that he loves you, he loves you too!

And that makes all of us the same. God showed us just how much he loves each one of us when he sent his Son Jesus to live with us and to die on the cross as he took all the punishment for our bad choices, our sins.

That is the greatest gift we could ever be given. But God gives us all other gifts too. Some of us are brilliant singers; some are talented artists. Some of us are storytellers; some of us are really good at listening. Some of us are good with our hands; some of us are extra good at caring for people.

There are lots of gifts that God gives us. And we get to choose how we use these gifts. We can choose to keep these gifts for ourselves if we want to. But does God who loves you and wants the best for you really want this?

Today we are thinking about the question "what is your golden thread?" Well, each of us have been given gifts and skills by God. And we are also called by God to do specific roles, or jobs, for him. This special task is our golden thread.

Paul writes that some people are called to be apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. They are called specifically to lead the church, to tell people about Jesus, to teach people about God.

But this isn't an exclusive list of what people are called to do, because God calls people to do all sorts of things. When Paul wrote about the gifts God gives the Church, he could just have easily written about the cake-makers, the chair-movers,

and the toilet-cleaners. Those who serve the Church and serve God in less obvious but still important ways.

Or he could have written about those who are called to serve God and God's people outside the church, in their jobs, their schools and communities.

So how do you know what God is calling you to do? How do you know what your golden thread is? You have to listen to what God is saying to you. Sometimes God speaks through prayer, when we take time to be quiet and sense God's presence. Sometimes it's something in the Bible, as you're reading and something suddenly jumps out in a new and different way. Maybe it will be the words your friends or family say, "have you thought about…?" And that feeling or that suggestion will follow you until you say "yes" to God.

And sometimes, what God is asking you to do now is different to what he will ask you to do in 5 years, 10 years or even 20.

In nature, we talk about the importance of biodiversity. This is the idea that we need lots of different plants, insects and animals for creation to grow and to flourish.

This is what the Church is like. We need people with different callings. Yes, some of us are called to roles

that seem more exciting on the surface, but none of these callings is any better or more important than any other.

Someone who is called to preach and answers that call is serving God just as much as the person who answers a call to making tea and coffee after the service. The person who is called by God to work with children and leads the Sunday school is serving God just as much as the person who is called to pray for their friends at school.

All of us, when we use the gifts God gives us are part of something bigger. When we love God and love each other something wonderful happens. We build each other up. Our gifts and skills weave together into something greater. Our individual golden threads become twisted into a woven tapestry, something beautiful. We become united as the Church of Christ, where each person is valued for who they are, each person is loved as they are and all grown in faith and knowledge of God.

This is what Paul, in a different letter, calls "the body of Christ." This is Church; all God's people, of all ages and abilities, with their own unique gifts and skills, worshiping the one God and Father of all, who is over all, in all, and living through all. Jesus is at the centre, but all our golden threads

should weave together in our loving and our serving.