

On several occasions recently I have found myself saying that it is extraordinary how a number of significant decisions have all coincided during the last couple of years.

The arrival of new leaders in the diocesan team, the move of the diocesan offices to new premises, the conclusion of a major and long awaited development in the centre of Blackburn around the Cathedral and the development of our new Diocesan Vision 2026: Healthy Churches Transforming Communities all combine to create an exciting fresh energy for the work God has called us to do.

I don't believe this is an accident or down to chance. I do believe that God is working all things together for good and we must respond with faith and enthusiasm.

That is not to decry the faithful ministry and mission work of previous years across Lancashire, but it is a fresh boost to all the excellent work being done around the diocese in the cause of the Gospel.

There are always times and seasons in the life of the church and it seems that here in Blackburn Diocese we are entering one of change and new ways of being a Christian community.

A phrase in one of the Common Worship prefaces in the prayers at Holy Communion speaks of 'learning to be the People of God once again.' That is not always comfortable, but it is essential if we are to pass the baton of the Gospel on to the next generation.

Our Vision 2026 is all about that reform and renewal of the church for the work of making Jesus Christ more widely known loved and believed.

It gives us a focus, so that our energy and resources can address some of the weaknesses of our shared life and prepare us to have much to celebrate on the 100th anniversary of being a diocese in 11 years' time.

My prayer is that we shall in the coming months find ourselves waiting upon God with a new urgency and praying with a new passion for others to come to faith in Jesus Christ.

Bishop Julian Henderson

Bishop of Blackburn