**Andrew Holmes**

Your name, age and original home village, town or city (ie the place where you grew up):

**Answer:**

Andrew Holmes. I grew up in Menston near Ilkley, West Yorkshire. Age 56

The Church in Blackburn Diocese where you are serving:

**Answer:**

St James Haslingden and St Thomas Musbury

Tell us about your family:

**Answer:**

I am married to Liz, and we have just celebrated our 32nd anniversary. I have three grown-up daughters, Jessica, Kathryn, and Laura, and a Border Collie, Bonnie.

If applicable, your former job before entering ministry?:

**Answer:**

I worked in the motor industry for more than 30 years in senior management positions, mainly for the Peugeot and Citroen franchise.

What led you to take the steps towards ordination?:

**Answer:**

I have been aware for many years of my calling. You could say I have put it off as ‘not the right time’ But God had a plan for me all along and so here I am responding to that call … 30 years in the making.

What’s been the best thing about your training?:

**Answer:**

I have had exceptional support and encouragement from my fellow ordinands. The Blackburn team and All Saints have been amazing. I also feel privileged to have an inspirational training incumbent.

Can you say what is the most important thing you have learned during your training?:

**Answer:**

So many things, this journey is truly transformational in every way. It has deepened my faith and prayer and my sense of calling and being at peace.

Reflecting on the difficult past year, please share a few thoughts about how the pandemic has impacted on ministry at this time …

**Answer:**

Without a doubt, it has been a challenging year and not the kind of year I expected as a Deacon. However, the Church for us has never closed, even though worship has not always been possible in our buildings.

Thirteen online services each week and an expanding food ministry and sending out more than 200 meals each week has meant I have been able to engage and get to know people.

At the same time I have been able to really grab hold of what our Diocesan Vision 2026 looks like in Haslingden and Helmshore. Together with my Vicar, we have also explored many new ways of sharing our faith and love out in the community amongst the lonely and/or vulnerable.

Meanwhile, what are some of your personal reflections on ministry in the post-pandemic period that lies ahead; the challenges and the opportunities?

**Answer:**

I believe the Church has a real opportunity to stay connected. We have had to learn quickly and respond to the most unusual of circumstances. It is easy to go back to the way it was before, but the new normal, whatever that is, will be different. I believe we need to keep up the momentum as we grow leaders and continue looking towards 2026 and our Vision of healthy churches and transforming communities. I think it is an exciting time for God’s mission in Lancashire.

Tell us something people don’t know about you that might surprise them?:

**Answer:**

I once sang in a production of La Boheme with Opera North.

What do you view as your most significant personal achievement, before or during training?

**Answer:**

Three daughters off to university. Liz and I are proud of our daughters and all that they have achieved. My whole family is significant to me and has been with me through the ups and downs of training and pushed me to study further.

Your favourite literary quote (it can be from the Bible or elsewhere) and, briefly, why?:

**Answer:**

Psalm 139 “You searched me O Lord, and you know me”.

God had continually searched for me through my journey, and I am sure that will need to continue through my ministry. This Psalm reminds us that we are all loved equally, even with our faults and failings, that love never ends.

How do you hope to continue to support the Diocesan Vision 2026 at a parish level?

**Answer:**

To support new leaders that have come as volunteers in the pandemic is vital in our parishes. With my training incumbent and the PCCs our vision is growing. Plenty is going on to transform both our churches and our community. There is an energy in mission, and I look forward to being part of it.

Finally, when you get the chance, how do you relax?:

**Answer:**

An hour on the fabulous four manual Father Willis organ at St James’ Haslingden does it for me. I am just as excited now as I was at the age of seven. I also like a good walk and I am lucky that there are many good walks in the Rossendale Valley. Even a walk up the ‘Musbury Tor’ if I am feeling energetic!