**Bryn Naylor**

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

**Answer: Bryn Naylor; 36; Darwen, Lancashire**

The church in Blackburn Diocese where you are serving:

**Answer: All Saints, Higher Walton and Holy Trinity, Hoghton**

Tell us about your family:

**Answer: Married to Rhiannon with three children: Maxwell (5), Grace (3) and Ella (1)**

If applicable, your former job before entering ministry?:

**Answer: Civil Service**

What led you to take the steps towards ordination?:

**Answer: When I became a Christian in 2012 I had a niggling sense that God might want me to dedicate my life more fully to ministry in some way. I put it to one side for a while but I couldn’t quite shake it. Eventually I shared it with the vicar of my church at the time, beginning a journey of discernment that led to a growing conviction that God was calling me to ordained ministry.**

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

**Answer: Having the time and space to focus on academic study of theology in a diverse community of fellow Christians, while at the same time having the opportunity to experience the practical side of ministry on placement and in community life.**

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

**Answer: I’ve not only been able to delve deeper into who God is from an academic perspective, but I’ve found that deepening this knowledge has also helped me to have fresh experiences of His grace and to grow in my relationship with Him.**

Reflecting on the difficult past year, please share a few thoughts about how the pandemic has impacted on ministry at this time (you could reflect how people have adapted to the circumstances in different ways as part of this response) …

**Answer: Despite the difficult circumstances it has struck me how church has continued to be church: sharing the love of God, responding to people’s needs, maintaining community and building one another up in Christ.**

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 think there might be challenges in terms of getting people physically back to church: many have experienced the joys of being able to attend church from their home and we might have to work hard to re-establish the sense of community that comes from gathering together physically.**

**But there has also been a real opportunity to reach people who might otherwise not have been reached: those who might have been nervous or reluctant to enter a church have felt more comfortable engaging with church from a distance and we have an opportunity to communicate God’s love to these people.**

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

**Answer: I speak four languages (and have also been able to learn a bit of Biblical Hebrew during my training).**

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

**Answer: Being able to juggle family life (with three children under five) at the same time as training for ministry and studying for a degree amid COVID-19 restrictions has felt like an achievement but has only been possible through God’s grace and help and the incredible support of my wife and others around me.**

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

**Answer: Matthew 11:28-30 – ‘Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.’**

**After years of grappling with my faith, I read this verse and heard Jesus inviting me to come to him, to trust in him and to find rest in him. And I felt like I experienced that rest when I committed my life to following him.**

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

**Answer: I’m excited to join in the Diocese’s work of making Jesus known in our local communities, sharing his love with those around us and helping people to begin a relationship with him. I’m also looking forward to helping people to grow in their relationship with Jesus and in their discipleship, so that they too can be equipped to lead in the church’s mission and be witnesses to Jesus in their everyday lives.**

How would you express your own vision for the church?:

**Answer: My vision is that the church is a place where people can encounter the love that God has for them by meeting with Jesus Christ, that it’s a community where all can feel welcomed, loved and supported as they grow in their relationship with him. My vision is also that the church is a community that serves and transforms its wider community by making God’s love known in both word and action.**

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

**Answer: I like running (although I’m slightly nervous about the hills around Hoghton); reading a variety of fiction; music; foreign languages; spending time with friends and family (which I know we’ve all missed this past year) and sitting down with my wife to watch a good Netflix series. We’ve also recently become a bit addicted to the game Bananagrams!**