**Catherine Haydon**

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

**Answer: Catherine Haydon, 33, from Blackpool originally.**

The church in Blackburn Diocese where you are serving:

**Answer: Morecambe Parish Church.**

Tell us about your family:

**Answer: I’m the eldest of 4 children, and desperately on the hunt for a dog!**

If applicable, your former job before entering ministry?:

**Answer: I was a secondary school teacher in the Midlands, teaching Religious Studies, Philosophy and Ethics, and then a youth worker for a group of churches in south east London.**

What led you to take the steps towards ordination?:

**Answer: God is very persistent! A lot of people had suggested it over many years, and I decided I should finally listen and explore if this was really what God was calling me to. The sense of peace that came over me once I’d made that decision really confirmed that this is what I’m made to do.**

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

**Answer: I made some incredible lifelong friends and discovered feminist theology – it was like somebody finally giving me the words to express all these things I’d innately felt about God. I’ve also developed my resilience, God certainly stretched and tested me over my 3 years at college!**

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

**Answer: That I am called with my personality and character, not in spite of it. This is who God has made me to be, and the one who calls is always faithful.**

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: As an introvert, lockdown has reminded me just how important connection and relationships really are. Not being able to meet together as a church family has been a challenging way to start my ordained ministry. It’s been brilliant to be able to serve our local community in very practical ways though.**

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’ve seen anew the need for creativity and accessibility, how can we make sure all people can access our worship? Our online provision should not just be a stopgap. And how do we continue to engage with those people who have joined our online community during this time?**

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

**Answer: It took me 4 attempts to finally pass my driving test.**

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

**Answer: A few years ago I ran a half marathon with my sister, having done absolutely no training. My hip still reminds me of this regularly, but we raised an incredible of money for a charity which funds research and supports families impacted by the rare degenerative condition my dad had (progressive supranuclear palsy, PSP).**

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

**Answer: ‘Nothing can ever separate us from the love of God,’ Romans 8:38-39**

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

**Answer: I love to see people growing in their faith as disciples of Christ and hope to be able to build deeper relationships and encourage people in this. Championing young women particularly is something I’m really keen on. I’d also like to support people in learning to talk about their faith with others without being afraid to do so.**

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

**Answer: The church for me is about a community of people gathered together as family, regardless of differences, united by their love for Jesus.**

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

**Answer: I love to cook and bake, glass of wine in hand and music blaring. I’m a bit of a bookworm too and walking down the beach for ice cream is one of the perks of living by the sea.**