**Dan Freeman**

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

**Answer: Dan Freeman, Age: 32; hometown: Grew up in Basingstoke (or as I prefer to refer to it: Amazingstoke)**

The church in Blackburn Diocese where you are serving:

**Answer: Parish of the Risen Lord, Preston (St Matthew's, St James' and St Matthews' Mission.)**

Tell us about your family:

**Answer: I'm married to the beautiful Geraldine and have 2 children Zoe (3) Luke (1).**

If applicable, your former job before entering ministry?:

**Answer: I worked as a trainee minister at St Andrew's Ashton and as a Veterinary Surgeon in Preston and Cambridge.**

What led you to take the steps towards ordination?:

**Answer: I have found knowing Jesus to be the best thing in my life and I want to help others find him and grow in him.**

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

**Answer: Being blown away by how Majestic God is.**

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

**Answer: That God is God and I am a human**

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: I think lockdown has shown us that we are more than brains on sticks! There is something deeply dissatisfying about sitting behind a computer and being beamed into one another’s sitting rooms. Ministry is about serving the whole person, mind and body. This can be done best through face-to-face relationships.**

**Lockdown has also increased people’s sympathy. As we have gone through this hard time, we find it easier to identify with others in their need. As a result, foodbanks have sprung up and people are phoning those who live on their own. A hunger for prayer has also developed, even for those who aren’t religious, and Christians unable to meet each other have increased their praying for one other.**

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

**Answer: Lockdown has been really hard. People have faced bereavement, mental health struggles, financial difficulties, isolation and more. As we emerge from lockdown we have questions about this. Is there an answer to those big questions of death and suffering?**

**Firstly, the Church is uniquely well placed to answer these questions. Christians follow a ‘man of sorrows who was familiar with grief’. This man, Jesus, also faced death. But the wonderful news of Christianity is Jesus rose from the dead never to die again.**

**Secondly many have felt the huge loss of community relationships. There is a hunger to spend time with people, to be accepted, loved and cared for and to offer ourselves to care for others. Church is a real community; old and young, rich and poor who come together as brothers and sisters. As Jesus has loved us so he sends us out into the world to love others.**

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

**Answer: I have signed the Official Secrets Act**

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

**Answer: Being given two children.**

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

**Answer: “I have come that they may have life and have it to the full.” John 10:10.**

**It’s common to think Jesus will spoil my fun, I used to think that, but this verse says it’s not true. I’ve found it true in my experiences too, when I’ve run after those places where I thought a full fun life was to be found, I’ve ended up dry and discouraged. Knowing Jesus has given me purpose, hope, confidence and joy.**

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

**Answer: I hope to get to know people in the parish from all different backgrounds and speak to them about Jesus**

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

**Answer: To be a community who love God, love one another and love the lost.**

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

**Answer: I enjoy sport; playing football and running. Before the pandemic I was hoping to beat my best parkrun 5k time. I love spending time with my family, going for walks in the great outdoors and play fighting with my children.**