**Matt Guilder**

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

**Answer: Matt Guilder, 33, grew up in Loughborough, a thriving market town, famous for its university and its diverse communities with my brother Andrew, who is now a primary school teacher, my Dad Alan, who was a Primary Head Teacher (and a Great British athlete) and Mum Denise, who sacrificed much to see us all flourish.**

The church in Blackburn Diocese where you are serving:

**Answer: St Thomas Church, Lancaster**

**It’s so exciting to be part of St Tees, the church has played a special part in my wife’s family for well over 50 years, if not longer!**

Tell us about your family:

**Answer: My wife Jenny is from Lancaster originally, although we met when her family lived in the midlands. She returned to study in Lancaster and it was always a dream of ours to return to Lancaster as a family and we are overjoyed to be back. Jenny is also training for ministry in the Blackburn Diocese.**

**Our son Ben is 8. He loves being outdoors, anything Mario and Sonic and loves listening to music. Our daughter Abi is 6, she loves anything arty and creative, listening to stories and baking**

Former job before entering ministry?:

**Answer:**

**Youth Worker for a decade. Last post was as Youth Minister at Trinity Churches in Shrewsbury, which I loved! Before that I was a Youth Minister at St Luke’s Hoylake and a Sports Coach. Whilst at University I was a Hospital Cleaner, delighted to say I worked for the NHS!**

Why did you decide to get ordained?:

**Answer: God said he needed people like me, he wanted me to broaden my ministry and stop limiting it. That God wanted me to trust him! I was very happy being a youth minister.**

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

**Answer: I loved being in residential training. We only went to Durham to have a night away, but on the tour and interviews with staff God showed us, we needed to be there. I loved having six very different placements, plus many more ministry opportunities.**

What’s the most important thing you have learned?:

**Answer: Our opening response each week at Cranmer All Age…**

**God is good and all the time**

**and all the time God is God**

**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 have felt like an online pastor! I have hardly met any of our very gathered congregation and have spent hours trying to video various bits and pieces for work. Having previously been in community in Durham where all our youth work/church ministry was very face to face this has been so difficult for us. Getting to know people etc has been really tough, but we have seen a great reception for the online work that we have done as a church which is encouraging.**

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

**More than ever people are needing the love of Jesus and to be transformed by his spirit. So, my prayer is we take the positive lessons learned from the past year or so and work to bless people with the good news of Jesus in all areas of life.**

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

**Answer: I am a massive introvert, but always present publicly extroverted, so people always assume I am an extrovert! I see myself as a professional extrovert and a private introvert…if that’s a thing!**

Your most significant personal achievement, before or during your training?

**Answer: My family and being Shropshire County Champion … but also seeing young people grow up with faith in Jesus.**

Favourite literary quote (it can be from the Bible or elsewhere) and, briefly, please say why:

**Answer: ‘Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate; our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond our measure, it is our light not our darkness that most frightens us.’ (Marianne Williamson)**

What will you do to support the Diocesan Vision 2026 at a parish level?

**Answer: I want to be an advocate of the vision and an encourager ...**

**Making: I want to be part of a Church which sees people come to faith and also grow deeper in their faith. to have friends who don’t know Jesus yet a share life with them.**

**Being: I want to be a presence in our community, representing and sharing Jesus with others. To be alongside others in all life’s twists and turns.**

**Growing: I want to see other leaders raised up to reach their own potential. Especially in preaching and mission.**

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

**Answer: I am passionate about All Age Church and Church as family not a business. I would love to be involved in revitalising or planting new congregations in the future. I am passionate about the parish model, where everyone is welcome and everyone is prayed for! Telling all Jesus is Good News for everyone!**

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

**Answer: I love to parkrun! Seriously love it! But running generally, watching comedy and family time. I also like to help people start running!**