**Simon Griffiths**

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

**Answer: Simon Griffiths, 38 years. Born and grew up in Rugby, Warwickshire.**

The church in Blackburn Diocese where you are serving:

**Answer: All Saints Preston**

Tell us about your family:

**Answer: I am married to Amy – we have 3 boys, Daniel, Nathan and Joseph (7, 6, and 4 respectively).**

If applicable, your former job before entering ministry?:

**Answer: Solicitor**

What led you to take the steps towards ordination?:

**Answer: Having become a Christian in my 20s, I became involved in different aspects of church life, and increasingly took on teaching and leading responsibilities and opportunities. Over time, with the opportunity to explore these giftings, it became clear to me, with encouragement from those around me, that my vocation lay not in practising law, but in ordained ministry. This is a conviction that has only strengthened through the discernment process and training prior to ordination.**

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

**Answer: It’s hard to narrow this down to a ‘best thing’! Studying biblical languages has been a real delight; reading the scriptures in the original Greek and Hebrew also requires you to slow down and dwell in the riches of God’s word, seeing nuances of language and emphasis that really do impact on teaching and wider application in the church.**

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

**Answer: In many ways, the most important thing I have learned through my studies is a deeper love of the Lord Jesus, and a richer understanding of the grace and care of my heavenly Father. Time and again I have been struck by the centrality of a deep, resilient, personal faith, and how a desire to continue growing in godliness is foundational to a faithful, enduring ministry.**

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: In the midst of many hardships, it has been a real encouragement over the past year to see the manifold ways in which Christians have continually sought to love and encourage one another and their neighbours.**

**This has been both individually in acts of kindness, and corporately in and through church meetings (often online) and also creative ideas (such as a letter-writing exchange amongst church family members during lockdown).**

**It has also highlighted just how deeply inter-personal and relational we are, and how we truly need one another.**

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

**Answer: As the fog of life in pandemic is beginning to lift a little, we can see just how difficult this past year has been – for instance in the realities of sickness and death, the lingering pain of loneliness, and the toll on mental well-being for so many.**

**Spiritually, we know that whilst wonderfully some have engaged with church for the first time through online media, many will have moved further away. We have seen many ways in which families and the elderly in particular have found it harder during church closures and distancing restrictions.**

**However, many of these challenges also provide opportunities for the gospel in a world that is confused and desperately in need of hope. With technology too, churches are finding new opportunities to share the gospel with their community.**

**My prayer is that in our deeper recognition of our frailty and dependence, as a church we will also be drawn into a deeper reliance on the Lord in prayer.**

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

**Answer: I once drove a rickety old van from London to Mongolia!**

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

**Answer: Again, a hard one to answer! I’m very thankful to the Lord for the many ways in which he has graciously provided for me throughout my life. Maybe we can say becoming a husband and a father!**

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

**Answer:**

**‘You move us to delight in praising You; for You have made us for Yourself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in You.’ (Augustine, Confessions, 1.1).**

**This quote so beautifully captures the reality of life in relationship with our Creator: in God’s initiative in bringing us into relationship with him; in the reality of who we are as those made for that relationship and the implication that nowhere else but with our Creator will we truly find the rest we long for.**

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

**Answer: I look forward to furthering the Diocesan Vision at All Saints in discipleship, through teaching and pastoring others in the church, at all ages and stages, and equipping the whole church. I am also keen to reach out as a church and in my own life into the community with the good news, to bear witness in word and deed.**

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

**Answer: To see the people of God built up in love and knowledge of the Lord Jesus, as they seek to encourage one another and make disciples of the nations through gospel witness.**

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

**Answer: I love to go for long walks and enjoy cooking good food, and spending time with my family.**