

BLACKPOOL MINISTRY EXPERIENCE

Participant Information Guide



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INTRODUCTION

Do you feel called to spend a year exploring your call to ministry in a parish in north-west England? Do you want to experience at first-hand what ministry is about? Might you be wondering about a call to ordained or lay ministry in the Church? Do you have a heart for reaching out to the marginalised in today's society?

The Church of England Ministry Experience Scheme in the Diocese of Blackburn offers parish placements to young adults (aged 18 to 29). It's a chance, within the national structure of the Church of England Ministerial Experience Scheme, to spend a placement year, funded and supported, experiencing ministry in a deprived parish in Blackpool.

VISION 2026



Your placement with us will take place within the context of Vision 2026 as we work together in our Diocese to

become healthy churches, transforming our communities.

The year 2026 marks the centenary of the formation of the Diocese of Blackburn. In the ten years leading up to our centenary, Vision 2026 is a plan to turn around the long-term trend of gradually declining attendance. Our vision is for the growth of God's kingdom, not just of his church. Our vision is to develop healthy churches which transform their communities, a vision in which making disciples for Jesus Christ and pursuing social justice sit side by side.

As a diocese with our Vision, we are willing to face the cost of change; and in prayer we see the grace and power of God which can alone bring renewal and growth. We are committed to work together (clergy, laity, church schools, diocesan staff and the cathedral) to deliver Vision 2026 by:

Making disciples of Jesus Christ

- Knowing the Scriptures better through reading, teaching, preaching and study

- Praying with greater depth and urgency for the Kingdom of God to come
- Giving generously of our time, talents and money to the cause of Christ

Being witnesses to Jesus Christ

- Sharing the Gospel of salvation with confidence
- Holding regular enquirers courses in as many local churches as possible
- Showing God's love in action through projects that meet a local human need
- Offering thorough and accessible Baptism preparation and follow-up
- Planting or renewing 50 new strategic congregations by 2026

Growing leaders for Jesus Christ

- Supporting and equipping the current leadership for today's context
- Enabling missional leadership in every Christian community
- Liberating lay leadership for greater participation
- Creating the varied patterns of Sunday and weekday worship necessary to welcome all kinds of people, especially the newcomer

Through all this we are prioritising work among children, young people and schools to raise up a new generation for Christ.

The MES participants will be a part of this vision as we use this scheme to grow leaders by giving young people space to explore their own calling, whether that's to lay or ordained ministry, or something else altogether.

THE PLACE



Blackpool offers a wide range of opportunities for those who wish to experience life and ministry in an urban setting within areas of deprivation. Some of our parishes are amongst the most deprived ones in the Church of England.

Alongside a high proportion of retired aged residents, there is also high

transience in rented accommodation for the younger population and a strong contrast between the bright lights of the promenade and the poverty found a few streets away. In Blackpool we have many charities and organisations which work to support those in poverty.

In Blackpool there is also a strong sense of community. Many of those who live here have a real commitment to the town, and a sense of pride and belonging, held alongside a desire to see improvements where they live.

COMMUNITY LIVING

The participants will live together in a community house on the Mereside estate on the outskirts of Blackpool. This estate has good bus links to the rest of the town. As well as having its own shops and a take-away, the estate is also next to a large superstore and other facilities. Each participant will have their own bedroom and will share the kitchen, bathroom and living areas. The house chaplains will be in regular touch to ensure all is going well. Living together in Christian community will be a key element in this scheme.

WORSHIP

The heart of the church life is prayer and worship, from which everything else flows. In Blackpool you will find a wide range of different worship experiences within a range of spirituality. Prayer and worship will form a key component in your time with us and you will have the opportunity to be regularly involved with planning and leading parts of the worship services.



OUTREACH



Wherever you are placed in Blackpool, you will be involved in community outreach projects. You will be working alongside vulnerable adults, the homeless and those in great need. You will also be able to work

in primary and secondary school settings and well as youth and children's work outside the school setting. We are very proud of St George's - our Church of England Secondary School here in Blackpool and whichever church you are placed with, each participant will have the opportunity to be involved with St George's, working alongside their chaplain, at different times throughout the year.

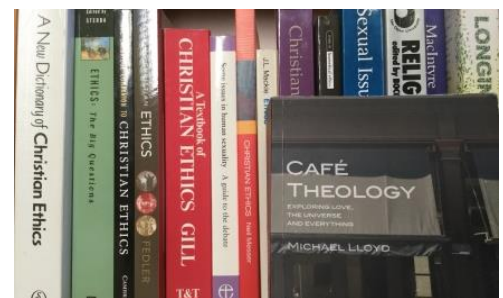
You will be able to explore fresh expressions of church in Blackpool and we will also be open to you bringing new ideas from your own previous experience, using your passion and giftings to share the love of God in our communities.



STUDY AND REFLECTION

The most important thing in the scheme is not just what you experience, but how you reflect on and make use of that experience. There will be regular individual placement supervision sessions, as well as plenty of opportunities for informal discussion and reflection.

All participants will follow a program of formal study – as there are several different options available, each participant will have a study program tailored to their experience, needs and ability.



PRACTICALITIES

Below is a list of some of the things you'll get up to in your year with us.

Worship and prayer

- Sharing fully in the life of daily prayer and worship, including Sundays, the Daily Office and weekday Eucharist
- Sharing in leading the Daily Office and other non-Eucharistic worship
- Reading, serving and leading intercessions at the Eucharist

- Possibility of preaching or giving talks, dependent on your background and experience
- Assisting in distributing Holy Communion and taking Communion to the sick and housebound
- Maintaining your own personal prayer life

Pastoral Care and Community Links

- Involvement in the churches' own community projects, and in others in the wider community
- Visiting those in need or who are sick, at home or in hospital
- Visits in connection with baptism, marriage and funeral ministry



Mission

- Helping develop and deliver mission projects in the parish
- Representing the Church in all the local communities
- Opportunity to experience other areas of mission and ministry through local links in Blackpool and the Diocese

Education and Nurture

- Involvement in bible study and nurture groups
- Working in the local schools, in assemblies and class RE work, and welcoming schools into the churches and developing school links
- Helping develop the gifts of church members and their discipleship



Support

- Supporting the clergy and lay leaders in a variety of administrative and practical tasks, including publicity, communications, preparing for worship, and tasks around the church buildings and surrounding community
- Involvement in church meetings and task groups

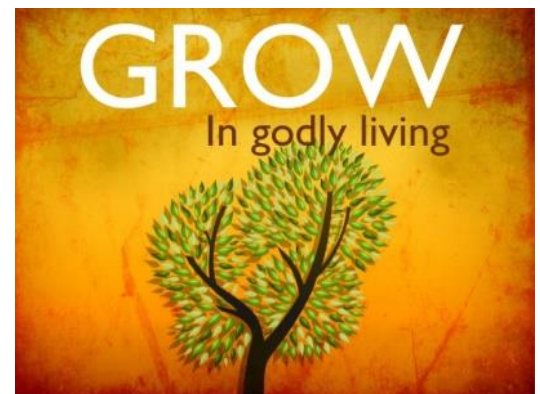
We offer you:

- Regular placement supervision and reflection with the local clergy
- Regular meetings with a personal mentor
- Participation in theological training and study, and supervision and reflection around this
- Rent-free accommodation in a shared house including council tax, gas, electricity, water bills and Wi-Fi. You will pay for your own food, personal phone bills, and possessions insurance.
- An allowance of £330 per month towards personal costs and food
- Reimbursement of all working expenses
- One day off per week, with usually another day of lighter duty, partly for study and preparation
- Four weeks holiday, including four Sundays. But please note you will be expected to work at the major church festivals
- House chaplains who will visit regularly to help with community living and arranged social events

CODE OF CONDUCT

As well as fulfilling your duties, we also will be asking you to adhere to an agreed behaviour code during your time with us.

- You will seek to develop your personal integrity
- You will seek to live a godly life
- You will have an ongoing commitment to growing in Christian maturity
- You will submit to godly spiritual authority
- You will seek to conduct any personal relationships within the guidelines for clergy as held by the Church of England
- You will acknowledge that your behaviour, in work and at leisure, is a reflection of the Christian life to all. This also includes your use of social media
- You will maintain confidentiality within appropriate boundaries



- You will deal with any grievances within the provided framework
Clarification of any of these points can be raised when you work with your supervisor on your personal working agreement.

WHAT NEXT?

If you decide during the placement that you're being called to explore further a vocation to lay or ordained ministry, there will be plenty of help and support in taking the next steps. If you decide that it's not something you are being called to, we are sure the experience here will still have provided much to help you on the next stage of your own vocational journey, wherever that takes you.

ANY QUESTIONS?



Please feel free to contact the scheme co-ordinator, the Revd Linda Tomkinson if you want to ask anything at all, or if you want to apply. The scheme runs each year from early September to early July. Please get in touch to find out the closing date for applications.

We do recommend applying early as there are only three places available. Informal visits, to meet us or to find out more, can be arranged: just get in touch!

Applicants will need to complete an application form and provide references, and appointments will be subject to a satisfactory enhanced DBS clearance.



To ask anything, to find out more, to arrange an informal conversation or visit, contact the scheme co-ordinator.

Rev Linda Tomkinson

Freedom House

8 Langdale Road

Blackpool, FY4 4RT

07784 325537

revlindat@hotmail.co.uk

