

**Name:** Mandy Hughes

**Age:** 63

**Original Home Village, Town or City:** Brighton Sussex

**The Church in Blackburn Diocese where you are serving:** St Michael and All Angels Hoole Preston

**Church Address:** Liverpool Old Road, Much Hoole  
Preston, Lancashire, PR45JQ

**If applicable, what was your former job before entering ministry?** Nurse and Health Visitor

### Tell us something about your journey towards ordination?

Its been a long one. Brought up in the Church of England, I had a good grounding in the Church before moving around for my career as a Nurse. This took me to experience many different Church traditions and periods of no Church input as I worked out what it all meant and who I was. Not sure if I've got that completely sorted yet! I lived and worked in Romania for 10 years, am fluent in their language and have a charity that is still operating today. We have been awarded a 'Cross of Nails' for Reconciliation as part of this work from Coventry Cathedral Centre for Reconciliation.

As a Nurse and later married to a Priest for 30 years, we moved around the UK . My work as a Nurse, and work in Romania - setting up a Charity for health, social, education and reconciliation work - have all been a calling from God and a lifetime of Ministry. Not always easy, especially in Romania in the 90s bringing up 2 small babies/children.

There has been a 'niggle' for many years edging me toward ordination. People who know me, commenting that I'd be a good vicar. After many years of this and living and working with a Vicar husband, and becoming a third Order Franciscan, I gave in and started to explore. Firstly through the Diocese of Canterbury then latterly, after the death of my husband, the Diocese of Blackburn. With a long life of twists and turns, ups and downs, and saying yes to God the future is exciting and there is more to discover!

What has been a) the most important thing you have learned and b) the most inspiring thing you have experienced during your training? (They can be different!)

### Answer for A:

Most importantly, I have learned to listen and respond to Gods calling, there is always an unrest until you do. I have done this in my work and life. Not saying yes can allow the world to overwhelm us, without peace of mind. I cannot do it by myself. The big and the little stuff.

### Answer for B:

My training has been inspiring and a complete joy. I was not a lover of school, and did not achieve. My nursing education was also inspiring. I have found that the essence of Emmanuel Theological College has been community. A supportive, caring and compassionate community. Inspiration for formation has come from the tutors and their management and their expertise, knowledge and delivery has been fantastic. I personally feel well equipped and wanting to know more.

**What are some of the personal challenges and opportunities you face in your ministry in the coming year?**

I think this will be a year of more learning, starting as a Curate and probably feeling that I know nothing and that I'm starting again! However I look forward to that with excitement and some trepidation. As a Church we are still in Vacancy so there will be challenges there, and if we are successful with appointing a new Rector, there will be a period of change and settling in.

My parents are elderly and in poor health so there will be some family challenges especially as they live many miles away.

**Many more parishes have embraced online opportunities to engage with their local communities alongside their existing services; especially since the pandemic. Please indicate ways in which you may have done this already or what plans you may have to explore ways to reach people in the 'digital space' in the future:**

Throughout the pandemic we offered services, prayer time and confirmation preparation online mainly through Zoom and this was vital for keeping in touch with people, and offering spiritual support. We still use it occasionally for meetings.

We sometimes live stream services and post on our Facebook page and website.

I think we need to consider a way of offering our outreach and pastoral care in a way that is more Inclusive. We can look towards being creative with social media. podcasts, blogs, and connecting with the digital world, moving forward with the means of communication popular now.

Bishop Philip has said: "I am committed to continuing the growth of the church in Lancashire, helping to build joyful Christian communities. I would love to see the Church of England in Lancashire being an ever-stronger voice for justice, especially for the poorest. And I believe children and young people need to be at the very heart of all that we do."

**How will you seek to support the Bishop in fulfilling these aims?**

Our church has a real commitment to children and young people (CYP). For the past five years we have employed a CYP Minister, and the quality of our work with children is excellent. As a PCC this needs to be built upon and we are talking regularly about CYP as all of our business not merely our Minister. The CYP Ministry reaches about 300 children over a monthly period. Working with schools, the wider community and parents/carers we are bringing them to the family of God. This is difficult work and our Minister has my full support and this is an emphasis for a new Rector. We are looking at fresh expressions, and with the help of the Diocesan advisors looking to plan the future.

We are a wealthy community generally, but there are plenty of people/families who are on the margins of Church/Faith who we have yet to reach.

**What do you view as your most significant personal achievement? (This may be connected to your ordination training of course or it could be something else from another aspect of your life.)**

Apart from my successful bringing up of 2 children and an active part in my grandchildren's lives. My greatest achievement is finally saying yes to God with all my heart. I have many work achievements and they are important to me but my relationship with God is the most important.

**Tell us about your family/ loved ones:**

I have two children who are now 32 and 33. Between them they have 3 children all boys. I was Married to a Priest for 30 years, sadly passed away six years ago, who encouraged me in my discernment for Ministry. I have elderly parents who live in Brighton and a sister younger than me who lives in Sussex. I have a niece and nephew. My daughter has a Phd in Cancer research, my son has degree in Business, my nephew is a Physio and my niece is a Travel Manager. My sister is also a Nurse.

I am close to them all and see them when I can. I have some really good friends dotted around the country and good friends in Romania from the time we lived there. I share my home (I live alone) with my dog Jet who is an ex racing Greyhound. My other Greyhound died a few months ago.

I usually have a house full of sighthounds (greyhounds, whippets and lurchers) as I board them. My family and friends are important to me and I try to be supportive of them and keep in touch.

### **What do you do to chill out and relax?**

My dogs, a good box set on the TV, time with my grandchildren and time with friends. I also go to the gym. I like to go out for coffee with friends and lunch with my son. My daughter lives with her family in Austria so I look forward to quality time with her when I can.

I need to learn to relax more and 'get out more' and after my training I hope to do a bit of travelling.

### **Tell us something people don't know about you that might surprise them?**

I have a largish tattoo of a Celtic tree of life on my back and I have an MBE for services to the community and healthcare in Romania. I have Irish and Gypsy ancestry.