

<b>Name:</b>	Anthony Thomas Howarth
<b>Age:</b>	49
<b>Original Home Village, Town or City:</b>	Burnley
<b>The Church in Blackburn Diocese where you are serving:</b>	St Bartholomew Colne
<b>Church Address:</b>	St Bartholomew Church, 28 Ivegate Church Street, Colne, Lancashire, BB8 0LQ
<b>If applicable, what was your former job before entering ministry?</b>	Studied music and later theology before taking next steps as outlined in my next response.

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

I sensed a calling to ministry in my late teens. I initially studied music but then went on to study Theology at the Assemblies of God Bible College earning a degree in Biblical Theology. After my seminary training I accepted a post working with a Church in Colne in Lancashire. I was responsible for developing the youth ministry at the church. Later, I was asked to take on the role of associate Pastor and following this after two years was asked to take on the role of Pastor. After eleven years at the church I moved on to working for a charity helping people battling with addiction issues. I worked for five years as a teacher delivering courses to help those in recovery gain work or move on to educational courses or voluntary work. Whilst working for the charity I was approached to take on the Pastorate of a church in Barrowford. I accepted and have pastored the church for six years. Both myself and my church are beginning a journey as we join the Anglican church where I will serve as Deacon. I am married to Diane and have three teenage children.

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:**

The most important thing I have learned is gratefulness. Gratefulness acknowledges that everything we have and everything we are is a gift from God. Gratefulness leaves no room for pride. Gratefulness can only be expressed through humility. Gratefulness prevents self seeking and self aggrandisement. Gratefulness will always bring us closer to Jesus.

**Answer for B:**

The most inspiring thing I have experienced is the transformation of lives by the power of the Holy Spirit. We can do a lot to help people, support people and nurture people, but we cannot change their lives. This is, and always will be, the work of God. This is true for me also.

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

To learn new ways of worshipping. To experience new expressions of prayer. To become part of a new church community. To meet the joys and challenges of parish ministry. To grow in my understanding of what is truly means to be a priest and to serve God and the people.

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:

I think it is vital to use the digital space we now have to promote the gospel. I believe it is vital to engage with online interactions in a healthy way. I hope to positively engage our young adults particularly to help us how better to engage online and make the good news known and to also facilitate information about church services and provision to reach the wider community.

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?**

Nelson Mandela said it takes a community to raise a child. This is true. But it also takes a child to teach a community what safety and happiness really mean. It is my belief that the church should be the model of what a safe and happy community is. In my experience, how a church treats its most vulnerable members and those of the community is an indication of how much we are living out the gospel. Jesus always prioritised the vulnerable, broken, ostracised and abused, and created a safe and loving space for them in the new community of faith he came to help us create. We also, like Jesus, must be a voice for those who do not have a voice or are not being listened to. It is our responsibility not only to meet the needs of the poor but to speak up for their rights against injustice.

**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.)**

I think my most significant achievement is responding to the call of God. But I have to qualify this by saying that it was only with the help of God (and a loving family and church community) that I was able to carry on when faced with much difficulty particularly with regards to challenges with my mental health. I believe I am here because of the grace of God but I also believe that I am stronger today for having faced these challenges.

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

I am married to Diane and we have been together for 30 years. We have three children. Nico, who is 21, Sophie who is 19, and Evie who is 15. Nico is studying maths and physics at Lancaster University. Sophie has been accepted by several universities to study paramedicine. Evie is about to take her GCSE exams. My wife Diane is a music teacher both in secondary school and privately.

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

I love to play the drums and I am in a band. I do Judo, karate and jujitsu. I also love to read and go to the cinema when I get chance.

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

I am a huge sci-fi fan and I love to read and watch sci-fi in my spare time. I would love to write a sci-fi novel one day.