

Name: John Lisle

 Age: 28

 Original Home Village, Town or City: Boston

 The Church in Blackburn Diocese where you are serving: St. Luke's Blackburn

 Church Address: St Luke's Blackburn, Bank Top

 Blackburn, Lancashire, BB2 1TA

 If applicable, what was your former job before entering ministry? Charity Sector, anti-slavery work

Tell us something about your journey towards ordination?

My journey towards ordained ministry has been a nine year journey. I was first asked whether I'd consider ordination during an internship at St. Aldates, Oxford. At that point it was a pretty firm no! They were famous last words, and God has been on my case ever since! It was during the course of this year that the Bible came truly alive to me for the first time and I realised that God's desire for a renewed and restored creation answers every single one of the world's woes. My faith moved away from 'escaping to go and play a harp on a cloud', to asking God to use me to restore lives, rebuild communities, and renew creation.

During my university years, I helped to launch the Liverpool branch of a charity called JustLove (www.justloveuk.com) which seeks to inspire and release every Christian student to pursue the Biblical call to social justice. This was my first experience of leading Christians more into the fullness of the calling that God has on their lives, and it made me feel alive! This, combined with support from my then vicar and mentor Jude, encouraged me to being officially discerning a call to ordained ministry alongside serving as Student and Youth pastor.

The ordination question had been a long standing question mark for me, and the best wisdom I received was that there's only one way to remove the question mark, and that is formerly ask the question, and that it would be answered either way.

By God's Grace I am now coming towards ordination. I hope and pray that God will use me to make new disciples, and to call disciples into the fullness of following Jesus.

I pray also that I will be able to play my part in seeing the Church bring God's Kingdom of justice, mercy and righteousness in peoples' lives and our communities today.

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:

Intellectually we all know it, but training has re-emphasised the absolutely critical role of prayer as the foundation for all of the Church's ministry. We minister in God's Church, of which Christ is the head, and we must ask for The Holy Spirit to fill us and help us every day, and in every situation.

Answer for B:

Breaking bread with folks from across the breadth of the Church of England has inspired me to appreciate

the body of Christ in more of its fullness. It's been so inspiring to see how God calls people from all walks of life to serve him in ministry.

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

We're moving! When curacy begins my wife and I will have a lovely little 14 month old called Reuben, so making this new place a home we'll take a bit of time, but we're joining a fab Church family who will help us settle in quickly!

I am so excited to join the St. Luke's family, and to be part of all God is doing there! There are so many missional opportunities to get stuck into!

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've had experience ranging from online meetings, online prayer meetings, instagram live videos, Tik Tok etc. During my training my placement church ran 'Online Collective' for a time, which was a purely online community that gathered weekly, read scripture, listened to a short talk and prayed for one another. People engaged from all over the country!

I have co-lead an online alpha course as well.

Our world is increasingly digital, and I think it's important to find a healthy line between real life relationships with one another, and reaching new people online. God created us for real, genuine community. Using the online space creatively to invite people into the loving community of the church is vital and will increasingly become a vital step on people's journey of faith.

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?

Bishop Philip's vision for The Diocese of Blackburn is truly inspiring, and it makes me excited to play my part here.

For much of my ministry thus far I have sought to bring Jesus to the poorest, and forgotten of our society. Righteousness and Justice are the foundation of God's throne and I believe that we meet Jesus when we minister to the poor. Justice is at the heart of the Gospel, and if we are to be a light to the nations, we must seek justice for the poor. I agree with Bishop Philip, that Jesus has called those in poverty and in estates to life with him, and that there are many potential leaders of the Church trapped by poverty. Deacons are called to serve on the margins of society, and I fully intend to embrace this facet of ministry, sharing life with and walking alongside those whom the world has forgotten.

Investment in the discipleship of children and young people is absolutely vital. They are part of the Church of today as well as the Church of the future. The challenges that children and young people face today also represent a significant justice issue, from broken families to gang involvement. The transformative love of Jesus can bring light to these dark places. The Gospel tells them that they are loved beyond measure and have a place in God's Kingdom. We need to prioritise youth ministry in our churches.

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.)

Raising my lovely son!

Tell us about your family/ loved ones:

I am married to my wonderful wife, Tiria. We met at University and got married in 2022. Tiria is beautiful, fun, vibrant and brings joy to every room she walks into!

Tiria has recently completed a post-graduate diploma in Socially Engaged Arts Practice, seeking to build communities through creative projects. She has vast ministry experience, having worked as a chaplain in two universities and running a microchurch in a college in Warrington. She is a super mum to our son as well!

Reuben is our wonderful baby boy (well 14 months now!) and has an infectious smile. He already loves meeting new people and eating good food!

There are so many people to thank for their support along this journey, but for the sake of space, I'll just quickly mention my awesome Mum, Sister, and Peter as well as my ace in-laws who have supported us all of the way!

What do you do to chill out and relax?

I confess I'm a huge Liverpool FC fan and try to tune in to as many matches as possible. I like a good family walk, a catch up with friends and eating good curry.

Music is a huge passion of mine and I always enjoy playing or listening to music in my free time.

I'm also enjoy reading Christian books, particularly books about the future of the Church.

And the odd film or box set on Netflix is a great way to chill out!

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

When I was 10, I won a Blue Peter competition and appeared on six consecutive episodes!