

Name: Stephen Tisnell

Age: 31

Original Home Village, Town or City: Tunbridge Wells, Kent

The Church in Blackburn Diocese where you are serving: Preston Minster

Church Address: Preston Minster
Church Street, Preston, PR1 3BT

If applicable, what was your former job before entering ministry? Designer

Tell us something about your journey towards ordination?

My journey started in London when I came back to my childhood faith in my early twenties. Quickly after coming back to church I was invited to help lead a students group and after that I quickly became engaged in ministry. Over a few years that engagement built up into a sense of calling and I started an internship to continue exploring that calling.

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've learnt was the need to be authentic. It's taken a long time for me to accept that God called me as I am rather than the perfect version of me I cannot be. God has used my flaws and failings much more than my strengths.

Answer for B:

The most inspiring thing I have learnt is the strength of ordinary faith. Often in ministry it can feel as if we're working on our own but at moments of crisis when we rely upon others we can see the power God has worked in their lives.

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

We have a little girl who was born in September and who will be turning 1 soon! While it's a great joy it's also been a big shift in life style!

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'm personally not convinced that digital space is the right place for churches other than through marketing and communication.

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."

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.)

Our daughter. She's wonderful!

Tell us about your family/ loved ones:

Ffion and I have been married for 4 years, and we have one daughter Tabitha. We love living in Preston and spending our time outside. Ffion has been accepted to study for ministry in September so we'll be a double clergy family soon!

What do you do to chill out and relax?

Before ministry I was a designer and artist so when I do have free time I love to spend it making things!

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

I've eaten a guinea pig. When I was 18 I went traveling in Peru and was offered guinea pig by a family I was staying with. It was delicious!