

Name: Tracy Hallows

Age: 60

Original Home Village, Town or City: Padiham

The Church in Blackburn Diocese where you are serving: St Luke's Brierfield and St Cuthbert's Burnley

Church Address: Burnley Rod, Brierfield
Nelson, Lancs, BB9 5JL

If applicable, what was your former job before entering ministry? Primary School Headteacher

Tell us something about your journey towards ordination?

Sadly my husband, Rev John Hallows, died suddenly in June 2018 whilst he was the chaplain for the ordinands. His death meant I had to leave the vicarage we were living in Gisburn and I bought a bungalow in Brierfield. I began worshipping at St Luke's in Brierfield. When I knew the vicar, Rev Stephen Adesanya was going to retire I asked him how I could be of help in the vacancy he said 'be ordained'. I thought he was crazy but after prayer and reflection and gentle guidance by the exploring team at the Diocese and the support of Bishop Philip I recognised that God was indeed calling me to the priesthood.

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:

Learning more about the breadth of the Anglican Church. Hoping that one day there will be perfect unity in Christ, accepting our differences but loving each other unconditionally.

Answer for B:

Bishop Philip becoming our Diocesan Bishop has been a great inspiration Despite challenges he remains steadfast in his conviction and passion for the people of our Diocese. Bishop Philip is unwavering in his mission to reach the marginalised and vulnerable in our communities and inspire our young people into action to spread the Good News of the Gospel.

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

I'm retiring as head teacher after 39 years in the teaching profession. Adapting to a new way of life and balancing retirement, family and curacy will be important in the months ahead.

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:

We are considering an online prayer group but whilst I'm working full time as a head teacher I do not have

the capacity to do this.

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?

I will of course be led by prayerful discernment as to where my skills can be best utilised. Once I am retired I will have the capacity to become involved in day time activities in my community. I am hoping to support the local New Neighbours project and the Burnley Community Grocery.

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 became a headteacher in 2006 and have served in 3 church schools in the Diocese. This calling has enabled me to share God's love with thousands of children and their families. Working in a Christian school I have been able to share my faith whilst supporting those of other faiths or no faith. It has been a great privilege to walk alongside families, particularly in their dark moments, to shine the hope and light of Jesus.

Tell us about your family/ loved ones:

I have been widow since 2018 and taking this ordination journey without my husband has not been easy. I have two sons, Ben is 33 and Tom 29 who, whilst they don't share my faith, have supported me. My Dad, now 87, and not in the best of health is my rock and always a tower of strength. His wisdom and guidance have been a constant in my life, although I haven't always listened!

What do you do to chill out and relax?

I enjoy walking and during retirement hope to spend more time exploring God's beautiful world. I do have a few holidays booked too!

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

Can't think of anything ... I'm an open book!