



Your name, age and original home village, town or city (the place where you grew up):

Answer: Karen Herschell, 51 years, Thornton-Cleveleys.

The church in Blackburn Diocese where you are serving:

Answer: The United Benefice of Ribchester, Hurst Green and Mitton

Tell us about your family:

Answer: I have been married to Stuart for 21 years; we have one son Xander who is 19 years old and a Springer Spaniel called Callie who is 18 months old.

Former job before entering ministry?:

Answer: My last job prior to starting training was working for the charity Disability First in Blackpool where I headed up the Disability Hate Crime Third Party Reporting Centre, supporting and advocating for disabled people who have been victims of hate crime.

Why did you decide to get ordained?:

Answer: It has never been my decision to get ordained. Eleven years ago I felt that I may be being called to ministry and all I have done was to follow that call to test whether that was the case. Although it was suggested that I put myself forward to consider ordination from the beginning, I did not feel that the time was right and subsequently trained for Reader ministry. However, the call to ordination did not go away and I felt compelled to continue to test this out knowing that if I was called to be a Priest then God would open the doors; likewise, if I was not called to ordination then I would have at least stepped out to test this out.

What's been the best thing about your training?:

Answer: To have had the opportunity in later life to spend there years at theological college to study full-time; delving deeper into the riches of scripture, tradition and reason and sharing that experience with a diverse student body from across the UK.

What's the most important thing you have learned?:

Answer: To become more myself; the person God created and is transforming me to be.

Name the most influential person in your Christian life to date and, briefly, say why.

Answer: There are many and at different stages of my faith journey...however, I 'met' for the first time Soren Kierkegaard, 19th century Danish philosopher and theologian and I haven't looked back since!

Say something about your future role and how you hope to serve:

Answer: I will be entering into my second year of curacy and look forward to being able to sacramentally serve as a Priest; as well as continuing serving and learning in parish ministry.

What would people not know about you that would surprise them?:

Answer: I doubt there is anything...However, an alternative career choice I would have liked to have been an Art Historian and I have a secret-ish passion for wanting to fly in a jet fighter!

What would you say was your most significant personal achievement to date, either in ministry or before you embarked on your training?

Answer: At my age you begin to accumulate personal achievements; to date in order I would probably say: passing my driving test, getting married, having our son, being licensed as a Reader and being Ordained...just being content with life and open to new experiences are really the daily achievements I wish to have.

Favourite literary quote (it can be from the Bible or elsewhere) and why?:

Answer: *"I'll think about it all to-morrow, at Tara. I can stand it then. Tomorrow, I'll think of some way to get him back. After all, to-morrow is another day."*

Scarlett O'Hara at the very end of Gone with the Wind. I love Scarlett's tenacity and determination to overcome when faced with difficulties and her ability to dust herself off and get back up again; and that we always have tomorrow to begin again as 'joy comes in the morning' (Psalm 30:5)

Do you have any unfulfilled ambitions?:

Answer: No. I feel I'm fulfilling them everyday

What will you do to support the ongoing Diocesan Vision 2026 Healthy Churches Transforming Communities at parish level?

Answer: I believe that at the heart of Healthy Churches Transforming Communities is the real presence of Jesus and through his body, the church; and I as a representative of Christ and of the church at a parish level will continue to incarnationally live out the good news amongst those who I live and serve and minister to. I have a passion for deepening people's discipleship through teaching, social action and the sacraments; and the occasional offices are a huge opportunity to draw alongside people in their joys and grief to incarnationally live out the gospel and present the love of Christ in word and deed.

How would you express your own vision for the church?:

Answer: This Lent I have been really struck with the following words from Isaiah 58:6-7 (NRSV)

Is not this the fast that I choose:
to loose the bonds of injustice,
to undo the thongs of the yoke,
to let the oppressed go free,
and to break every yoke?

Is it not to share your bread with the hungry,
and bring the homeless poor into your house;
when you see the naked, to cover them,
and not to hide yourself from your own kin?

I believe it is the mission of the church to seek and fight for justice, to speak up and speak truth to power into those situations where people are bound by injustice, poverty, addiction, circumstances, oppression etc. I believe that the church needs to find and discern its prophetic voice and be courageous in not only speaking but acting on those ties that do bind people and prevent them from seeing and experiencing the abundant life and freedom that Christ has won for all.

Finally, when you get the chance, how do you relax?:

Answer: I think this question should just be worded How do you relax? And not 'when you get the chance'...Jesus relaxed with friends and had quiet times and this should be built into our ministry and not just as an opportunity if there is spare time left over...to be healthy in mind, body and spirit we need to intentionally carve out time to relax. Even God rested!

I relax by walking the dog in the beautiful Ribble Valley countryside which is also a perfect opportunity in parish ministry to pastorally meet people and have conversations. I enjoy knitting, crocheting, reading, cooking and spending time with family and friends and listening to music.