

Video Message – Bishop Jill – 9 September 2020

This is a video invitation to our #HomeGrown online conference. 13-14 October. Everyone is welcome.

I have been so impressed by the ways in which our Diocesan family have stepped up and stepped out through all the challenges of lockdown.

Key workers have been serving under incredible stress, and yet there's been new innovations in our hospital chaplaincies. Schools have been closed for six months, and yet our teachers and young people have shown remarkable resilience even despite the challenges of exam results, food banks have been in overdrive, and people have been reaching out to their neighbours in isolation, youth groups have gone online. I have found an incredible openness to the Gospel in everyday conversations. In Lancashire, all the anecdotal evidence is that we're at the forefront of opening our churches again – gosh I am so conscious of those hidden hours of deep cleaning. Over 70% of our parishes are offering services online – so much incredible ingenuity

And yet as the Autumn nights draw in, I know many are tired and worn. The ongoing stress and uncertainty of lockdowns and financial hardships, health worries and the untold sadness of bereavement.

This is why we thought it would be timely to gather online for a pick me up. An online #HomeGrown conference. I find so much encouragement from the stories and people across Lancashire. It will be an opportunity to come together for input, seminars, news, worship and fun. You can find the programme is on our website: www.blackburn.anglican.org/events

7pm on Tuesday 13 October till 9pm Wednesday 14 October. Something for all ages, stages and backgrounds.

Come for as much or as little as you wish – but don't miss out. Pass the message on.

Most importantly – it will all be Home Grown!

As the Autumn nights draw in, one of the comforts I love is drawing up a chair near a log fire. There's a log fire in my flat in Longridge which gives me much joy.

Fire brings comfort and warmth in dark nights.

And so we've chosen as our theme for the conference, *Hearts on fire with love for you*. It's a simple line from Morning Prayer. But this is my hope and prayer for our time together. As we gather together as a family as the nights draw in, may our hearts be warmed with His fire – May His love comfort and restore us; and May his fire break into the darkness and set us on fire to burn for Him.

Hearts on fire with love for you.

Rt Rev Dr Jill Duff
Bishop of Lancaster