

**The Bishop of Blackburn**  
*The Rt Revd Julian T Henderson*

An open letter to the Diocese of Blackburn  
*Sent by email only*

29<sup>th</sup> April 2022

**Regarding a visit from The Most Reverend & Right Honourable Stephen Cottrell,  
Archbishop of York.**

Dear colleagues

I am very excited to tell you about the visit of the Archbishop of York to our diocese 27<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> May this year.

Archbishop Stephen is seeking to visit each diocese in the Northern Province for three days and I am delighted that we will be the first to welcome him as he does so. During his time here he will be visiting as much of our diocese as is possible, North, South, East and West, and involved in a wide variety of activities.

You will, no doubt, hear about some of these through local deanery and church networks but I wanted to highlight two particular events which will be open to all and I hope you will be able to attend.

On Saturday the 28<sup>th</sup> at 7pm Archbishop Stephen will be leading an evangelistic event at The Blackpool Pleasure Beach Globe Arena. This will be an evening of worship and testimony with a keynote address from the archbishop about what it means to follow Jesus and how He brings life in all its fullness. This event is particularly for those who have not yet made that decision, in the hope that they might come to do so!

Please do come yourself but please make sure you also bring a few friends and begin to pray now about who you could bring and that this evening will see many people come to Jesus for the first time. It is good this event is taking place during the ten day period of Thy Kingdom Come, when we pray for five people to come to faith, and you may wish to use this as part of that process.

More information and free tickets can be found by clicking on [this link](#). Seating and free parking will be allocated on a first come, first served basis so please do book quickly once you are sure you will attend.

We really want this event to be full to capacity so that it is a joyous occasion to worship God and hear what His Son has done for us. Please do publicise it widely. We have released posts on both Facebook and Twitter and the event will feature in our next parish update. Please share these from your church and personal social media accounts if you can and make it a really fantastic day out at the seaside.

The second event will be an open air service at Whalley Abbey, with the theme 'Rejoice', which will happen on Friday the 27<sup>th</sup> May at 7:30pm. This is an event for the whole family and you are invited to bring a picnic and rug/folding chairs to enjoy the evening there.

Archbishop Stephen will preach and preside at the service and we will have various visiting music groups and choirs to help lead our sung worship. One of the purposes of this occasion is for the Archbishop to ask for God's blessing in the renewed vision of the Abbey as a Centre for Christian Discipleship and Prayer.

If you would like to come please email [office@whalleyabbey.org](mailto:office@whalleyabbey.org) letting us know how many people to expect. Closer to the time, further details about the service and about parking will be sent to those who book but do remember the train station is only a short walk away.

The wet weather plan is to move the service into Whalley Parish church, which will dramatically reduce our capacity, but we pray for good weather.

Archbishop Stephen is really excited about coming to see us and has filmed a short trailer video to tell you about it which you can view [here](#).

In the meantime please continue to pray for this weekend, particularly that God will use it to open doors and that people will hear His call in their lives through the Gospel message that Archbishop Stephen will bring to the diocese.

For your prayers, Archbishop Stephen will be in Lancaster University on the Friday morning and then meeting with civic and religious leaders in Burnley in the afternoon. On Saturday he will be very busy as he will: lead a prayer breakfast, attend a science day, help at a mission on Cleveleys prom and pray with people on the streets in Blackpool town centre. On the Sunday morning he will preach and preside at Blackburn Cathedral during a special service of thanksgiving as a number of our churches turn 900 years old this year!

As ever,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "+ Julian". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal stroke.