

Heesoo Warner

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Name: Heesoo Warner

Age: 55

Original Home Village, Town or City: Nelson

The Church in Blackburn Diocese where you are serving: St. Bartholomew's Colne

If applicable, what was your former job before entering ministry? Lecturer in Durham University

In one word, how would you describe what ordination means to you? Surrender

Please give some insight (a few sentences) about your ordination decision? My decision to be ordained grew slowly over time, shaped by prayer, encouragement from others, and a growing sense that God was calling me to serve his people more deeply. I had doubts and questions, but I kept feeling a quiet pull toward ministry. I chose to step forward, and then realised that God was already ahead of me, inviting me to trust, to surrender my own plans, and to offer myself for the sake of the church and the people I'm called to serve.

What inspired you most during your ordination training? I was inspired by the way we discussed real-life struggles during the training. It helped me understand how ministry can support people in very practical ways. When I had difficulties, I was able to talk to the Chaplain and a close ordinand who then genuinely wanted to support me. Seeing other ordinands grow also inspired me.

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

One challenge for me is balancing ministry with my personal life and other responsibilities. Sometimes I focus so much on serving others that I forget to rest. Studying at college during the first year of curacy can be challenging, as I have to work extra hard to fully understand and apply it appropriately. However, this also gives me opportunities to learn more about myself and understand people who face challenges.

Building stronger connections between the parish church and the younger generation would be both a challenge and an opportunity. Many families are busy, and it can be difficult to help children and youth feel that the church is a place for them. I also need to learn the best way to work confidently in primary schools, since each school has its own rhythm and expectations. But I'm excited to spend more time in local primary schools, getting to know staff and pupils, and finding creative ways to introduce faith in a gentle and meaningful way. My hope is to convert all my challenges into opportunities.

Share some thoughts (a few sentences for each point) about how you will support the Bishop in achieving these aims, and also how you will encourage others to do the same?

I want to support the Bishop's vision by being present with people who are struggling, listening carefully to their stories, and ensuring their needs are practically met whenever possible, and also by shaping how I pray, preach, and serve. CAP, the life skills, the community grocery, the community café, and the Vintage messy church in my current church support this vision, and I want to implement similar activities in my curacy church. In my parish ministry, I want to take small, practical steps, such as connecting families with local support, partnering with community groups, and creating welcoming spaces for those who often feel unseen. I also want to encourage others by reminding them that justice begins with simple acts of compassion, and that they can use their gifts to lift up the most vulnerable in our community.

Please share some insights about what you personally and/or your church may be doing online; particularly anything innovative and successful you have done that other churches may be able to replicate.

Nothing particular. We have a Facebook page, Youtube and an X account at the moment to let the world see what's going on in our church community. However, I want to help build a stronger online presence for my curacy church.

Tell us about your family/ loved ones:

I am married to an Englishman, Mike, and we have a 17-year-old son, Daniel, currently doing A-levels at CRGS. We are committed to contributing our skills and time to our church. Mike is the treasurer, and Daniel is a sound engineer at church. Daniel's longstanding community volunteering has been recognised with the Young Citizen 2025 award, 'Highly Commended' by the High Sheriff of Lancashire. They are enthusiastic about trains and class cars.

What do you do in your free time?

I play the piano and recently I started learning the guitar. I enjoy walking, exploring the countryside and entertaining people at my house. I really love learning new things. In the past, I'd learned British Sign language, Chinese, Japanese, Spanish, flute and clarinet but I don't think I can remember all of it.

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

I interviewed Amata Kabua, the first president of Marshall Islands in 1994, and had the privilege of boarding his private plane. I went there with a production team to make a film. I was also invited to meet Geunhyang Park, the first female president of South Korea, when she visited the UK in 2013. I was the headteacher at the Manchester Korean School at that time. In 2016, I went to Poland to interview North Korean workers with a Channel 4 'Dispatches' team. I've got a black belt in Taekwondo.