

Sara Marriott

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Submission Date Mar 31, 2026 5:54 PM

Name: Sara Marriott

Age: 53

Original Home Village, Town or City: Oswaldtwistle

The Church in Blackburn Diocese where you are serving: Immanuel Feniscowles and St Francis Fenisccliffe

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

Please give some insight (a few sentences) about your ordination decision? Ordination, for me, was never about proving I was theologically articulate, or spiritually gifted. It was about letting people see that God calls the broken, the slightly bruised, and the ordinary; and that He wanted me just as I am. By stepping into this calling, I hope others might glimpse their own worth too, and trust that God has a plan for them. My story is simply a reminder that no one is beyond the reach of God's love.

What inspired you most during your ordination training? What inspired me most during my ordination training were the people who walked alongside me. My theological college peers, the lecturers who stretched and encouraged me, my placement supervisor and the congregations who welcomed me in, and my cheerleaders who never stopped believing I could actually do it.

What are some of the personal challenges and opportunities you face in your ministry in the coming year? Ministering in a new community has brought real personal challenges. Leaving my husband in our home parish means we still can't regularly worship together, and that absence is felt deeply. However, there have been profound opportunities to participate in the rhythms of life. For example, the privilege of walking alongside funeral families at such a precious and vulnerable time. Getting to know the local primary school children, listening to their stories and hearing who Jesus is to them, has been a joy that continually surprises me. Also working alongside a gentle, generous, and hilariously down-to-earth TI, who keeps encouraging me to be brave and step out in courage, has been one of the unexpected blessings of this season. These moments remind me why I'm here, even when the cost is real.

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?

My calling is shaped by the people I'm privileged to serve. Working with students at Blackburn Central High School has shown me how deeply young people need spaces of safety, hope, and honest conversation, and it's strengthened my desire to be present for them. I'm also increasingly aware of the quiet struggles many families face, and I feel called to stand alongside those who are stretched or overlooked. By rooting my ministry in compassion, advocacy, and attentive presence, I hope to play my part in building a church that notices and serves the most vulnerable and places children and young people at its heart, by giving them a platform for their voices to be heard.

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.

Alongside our in-person worship and gatherings, we've made a real effort to ensure that every church event is advertised online. It's a simple step, but it's helped people feel more connected and informed, especially those who can't always be with us in person. We are also committed to making online engagement a central part of our new parish vision and strategy; not as an add-on, but as a genuine way of building community, sharing faith, and reaching those who might never walk through our doors.

Tell us about your family/ loved ones:

I come from a small but mighty family, no children of our own, but we're blessed with nieces and nephews we adore and love watching grow up. Adam, my husband, is a Lay Minister in Oswaldtwistle and a passionate bell-ringer... a hobby I absolutely do not share.

What we lack in biological family, we more than make up for in our extended tribe of misfits, a wonderfully eclectic collection of friends who've become family in every way that matters, stretching across Lancashire and well beyond. They're the people who cheer us on, keep us grounded, and fill our lives with laughter, chaos, and grace.

What do you do in your free time?

Since being ordained, my free time has definitely shrunk a little... but we make the most of what we get. Escaping in Glenda, our beloved motorhome, is always a treat, and we cherish any chance to head out on an adventure. We love walking and a bit of birding (strictly birding, not twitching... there are limits). Anything outdoorsy makes us happy, as long as it eventually concludes indoors with a good café, a hot drink, and something sweet. That's our kind of balance.

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

I'm not adverse to a bit of dressing up if it helps bring a sermon to life. Give me a prop, a costume, or a slightly ridiculous visual aid and I'm usually halfway into it before I've had time to think twice. One particular highlight was becoming a roving reporter (high-vis jacket, microphone and all), broadcasting "live" from the growing walls of Jerusalem during our sermon series on Nehemiah. It was chaotic, joyful, and surprisingly effective.