Celebrating 100 Years of the Diocese of Blackburn and Blackburn Cathedral

Thursday 12th November 2026
7.30pm
Blackburn Cathedral

CELEBRATING 100 YEARS OF BLACKBURN DIOCESE
All for Jesus

THE DIOCESE OF BLACKBURN
THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND IN LANCASHIRE

Welcome from The Bishop of Blackburn

Dear Friends

Welcome to an evening of celebration!

On 12th November 1926 the Diocese of Blackburn came into being. You are present at our one hundredth birthday party!

A diocese is so much more than a convenient administrative gathering. It is a family, gathered around its bishops, with Jesus Christ its head.

As our Centenary logo reminds us, we exist All for Him.

So tonight, 'All for Jesus' is our song. The only reason we exist as a diocese is to worship the Lord Jesus and to make him known. And for one hundred years, through our schools, parishes and chaplaincies, we have sought to do just that.

At moments of celebration and in times of acute national crisis, from the open fields of the countryside to the terraces of East Lancashire, from the bright lights of Blackpool to the loneliness of the hills, Christians have declared Jesus in their words and in their lives, through service and through proclamation.

Today we rejoice in their faithful witness.

Of course, the last century has presented many challenges to the Diocese, as it has to the whole Church. We have been rocked by safeguarding scandals that have shattered the lives of survivors.

We have seen new challenges to the Gospel arise from societal, cultural, academic, and ideological developments. At times we have even been tempted to plan not for growth but for decline.

But even where we have gone astray, Jesus has been faithful. And as we celebrate our Centenary we do so in hope as a new generation looks afresh to Christ and as we launch a purposeful new diocesan vision, Joyful Followers of Jesus.

Tonight we welcome many friends of the Diocese: representatives of the Crown and county, ecumenical guests and church, civic and community leaders from across Lancashire and the North-West.

We are also delighted to welcome the Bishops of Chester and Manchester, the two Dioceses from which our Diocese was hewn, who will call us to worship.

And we gather for that greatest of all acts of thanksgiving, the Eucharist. Here as we meet him in the words of scripture and in the Sacrament of the altar, we dedicate our lives anew, All for Jesus.

May his name be held high across our county, and may the Diocese of Blackburn continue to exist solely to the glory of his name.



+ Philip Blackburn

Welcome from The Interim Dean of Blackburn

It is a particular joy, on behalf of everyone at Blackburn Cathedral, to welcome you as we gather to celebrate the Centenary of our diocese.

This is a very special moment in the life of both diocese and Cathedral. For one hundred years our stories have been intimately bound together and today gives us an opportunity to look back with gratitude, to give thanks to God for all that we share in the present, and to look forward with faith and hope.

A cathedral has a distinctive and honoured role within the life of a diocese: to be a place of prayer and worship, of gathering and encounter, and a place which seeks to serve the Bishop, the diocese and the communities among whom we are set. Today, that calling finds particular expression as we welcome people from our parishes and schools, from different communities and traditions, and from across the wider life of Lancashire. Blackburn Cathedral is here to serve the whole diocese and my hope is that everyone who comes through our doors will know that they are not simply visitors, but pilgrims and friends, truly at home in their Cathedral.

As we mark the Centenary, we give thanks for all that has been and look forward with hope to all that lies ahead. May this Eucharist and our celebration together deepen our common life, renew our shared mission and ministry, and send us out in faith and joyful anticipation.

We are delighted to welcome you. May this celebration bring joy, inspire thanksgiving and encourage us all as we look forward with hope as the next one hundred years unfold.

To him be all praise and glory, now and forever. Amen.



The Revd Canon Andrew Horsfall

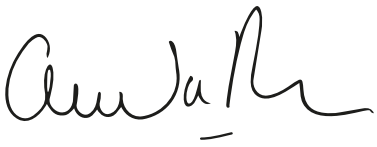
Message from His Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Lancashire

I am delighted to join in celebrating the Centenary of Blackburn Cathedral and the Diocese of Blackburn.

For one hundred years, the Church has been a steadfast presence in Lancashire, nurturing faith, prayer, and worship while offering friendship and practical support to communities across the county.

This anniversary is an opportunity to recognise the dedication of clergy, congregations and volunteers, whose service has contributed so much to the life of Lancashire.

My warmest congratulations and good wishes to everyone celebrating this historic milestone.



Amanda Parker JP

The History of Blackburn Diocese

The story of the Diocese of Blackburn begins at the turn of the twentieth century. Following the height of the industrial revolution and the population growth which accompanied it, it was apparent that reorganisation was needed to reduce the responsibility placed upon the Bishop of Manchester.

As the crow flies, it was more than 50 miles from Heaton Mersey in the south of the diocese to Leck in the far north and a journey time of almost a full day.

It was at the diocesan conference of 1903 that considerations towards splitting the Diocese of Manchester were started. Any new diocese formed out of the Diocese of Manchester was expected to comprise the archdeaconries of Lancaster and Blackburn. Two years later, a proposal to divide the diocese into three was brought forward - but failed to secure the support of the majority of deaneries.

As a result, the status quo remained until after the First World War, when the three-diocese proposal was revived. Under this scheme there would be a Diocese of Lancaster, a second new diocese for which no see town had been decided upon, and the existing Diocese of Manchester.

When William Temple was consecrated Bishop of Manchester in February 1921, he inherited these proposals and quickly realised the need for diocesan reorganisation. The economic difficulties facing the North West in the aftermath of the First World War, alongside the challenge of raising sufficient funds to support two new bishoprics, prompted a reconsideration of the proposals. By the summer of 1922 a revised proposal had emerged, instead calling for the creation of a new Diocese of Blackburn from part of the Diocese of Manchester.

Contemporary reports suggest that it was Temple himself who recognised the potential of Blackburn as the see town and its parish church as a future cathedral. Though not yet a century old, the building had the capacity to be extended and was well situated next to Blackburn railway station.

The Bishopric of Blackburn Measure received Royal Assent in July 1924. Just over six months later, a fundraising campaign was launched at King George's Hall to provide the £3,000 annual income required for the bishop and to secure a suitable episcopal residence.

What followed was a quite remarkable effort across the Diocese of Manchester, the scale of which is unlikely ever to be repeated.

Elma Yerburgh, a Blackburn philanthropist and daughter of Daniel Thwaites, opened the subscription list with a gift of £3,000. A further fundraising meeting was held at Manchester Town Hall in the June of 1925, by which time more than £20,000 had been

pledged towards the establishment of the new diocese. Of that total, the Blackburn Deanery alone had contributed over £11,000.

Whilst the subscription list reads like a who's who of North West industry and philanthropy, the success of the appeal rested equally, and if not more so, upon the generosity of the parishes.

Across the diocese, most parishes raised more than £100 each. Within less than a year, an extraordinary £75,000 had been collected. Satisfied that the necessary funds had been secured, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners certified the endowment, leaving only the publication of an Order in Council in the London Gazette required to bring the Diocese of Blackburn into being.

The Privy Council met at Buckingham Palace on 5 November 1926, and on 12 November the Order in Council establishing the Diocese of Blackburn was published. Blackburn Parish Church became Blackburn Cathedral, and over 25 years of labour had come to fruition.

Such was the success of the Diocese of Blackburn, and so strong the commitment of its clergy and people, that it soon faced a challenge on a scale not seen since the fundraising efforts of the mid-1920s.

The Education Act 1944 brought significant challenges for church schools. Many faced a choice: to invest substantially in improving their facilities or to transfer control to the local authority.

It was Bishop Wilfrid Askwith, the second Bishop of Blackburn, who led a campaign that raised almost £100,000 to preserve the church identity of schools across the diocese.

The strength of that achievement can still be seen today, with Blackburn continuing to have one of the highest proportions of church schools in the country.

Over the past century, both the Diocese of Blackburn and the wider Church of England have experienced profound changes in the religious landscape.

Yet Blackburn has often defied expectations.

Rather than managing decline, it has sought to look confidently and prayerfully towards the future. The vision for 2026 of Healthy Churches Transforming Communities reflects the same spirit of faith, generosity and mission that inspired the creation of the diocese 100 years earlier.

As a century of the Diocese of Blackburn is celebrated, it should be done so with confidence in God's continuing work among the people, churches and communities of this diocese.

Patrick Brown, Mission & Pastoral Services, Church Commissioners, 2026

A Brief History of Blackburn Cathedral

In 1922 the Bishop of Manchester, William Temple, submitted a proposal for a new diocese in Lancashire. There had been concern for a number of years that the Manchester diocese was too large and although there had been discussions about forming a new diocese, it was William Temple who brought the proposals to fruition.

Blackburn was chosen for the site for the Cathedral because the Parish Church had plenty of land to allow for a bigger building, it was built on sloping ground which would allow for a large crypt and it also had good bus and rail links next to it.

In 1924 Royal Assent was given for the new diocese to be created. Building work on the Cathedral could not begin until sufficient funds had been raised to pay the Bishop's stipend and to buy him a suitable residence. In 1925 the Bishopric of Blackburn Fund was launched at King George's Hall. The Reverend John Sinker presided. Mrs Elma Yerburgh, daughter of local brewer Daniel Thwaites, started the subscription list by donating £3,000 and King George V, in his capacity as Duke of Lancaster, gave 100 guineas.

On 12th November 1926 Orders in Council were issued and the Diocese of Blackburn came into being. The Right Reverend Percy Mark Herbert was installed as the first Bishop of Blackburn in 1927 and the Reverend John Sinker became the first Provost of the Cathedral. Fundraising began in earnest; a grand Pageant was staged at King George's Hall involving many Parish groups, John Sinker and others went about the diocese giving talks about the proposed Cathedral and sales of work were held. By 1933 sufficient funds had been raised to appoint Mr William Forsyth as architect. He drew up a design for a grand Gothic building with a central stone tower and a crypt.

A model was created and this was placed in shops and civic buildings. A film was made and was shown in cinemas as the trailer before the main film and a Penny Appeal was launched. In 1938 the Foundation Stone was laid by The Princess Royal. The plan was to retain the Nave of the 1826 parish church and extend the building from there.

Congregation members in all the parish churches were given penny boxes to take home in which they would put their spare change and from time to time a special service would be held at the Cathedral for people to bring along their boxes and add to the donations for the building works. These were joyous occasions and people felt that they were very much a part of the creation of this grand building.

In 1939 war broke out and by 1941 the government was no longer issuing building licences so all work stopped. Worship continued in the nave of the parish church but little else was possible until 1950. By this

time it was clear that there was not enough money to continue with the original design and in 1951, William Forsyth died. It wasn't until 1961 that the Bishop felt that there were sufficient funds to appoint Laurence King as the new architect. He was told that Forsyth's plans would need to be scaled back. He was not worried by this as he had a completely different vision for the building.

King was part of the Liturgical Movement which wished to bring back the emphasis in churches and cathedrals on the Eucharist. He favoured monastic buildings which were plain and light and so the first thing that he did was to take out all the stained glass from the nave and install the hand blown Swedish glass that you see today.

He also had a model built to demonstrate how the altar would be in a more central position under the Lantern Tower and able to be seen not only from the nave but also from both transepts. The main entrance was to be off the South Transept with sweeping steps up to it and an open air preaching platform by the doors. Fundraising was continuous but there were few large donations, Most of the money was donated by congregation members across the diocese giving what they could, whenever they could, making Blackburn Cathedral a truly people's cathedral.

1965 saw the rehallowing of the nave in the presence of H.R.H. Princess Margaret. In 1967 the Lantern Tower and spire were completed and the cross was raised to the top of the spire. In 1976 it was decided that the plans for the grand entrance could not be brought to fruition and the main entrance would continue to be at the West End.

However the font had already been installed in the South Transept in anticipation of the entrance being there so it was agreed that it would remain in its current position. The Cathedral was finally consecrated in November 1977 in the presence of Princess Alexandra of Kent.

Building work did not cease at this point, indeed in 2000 and 2001 the east end roofs and parapets were rebuilt to blend them into the existing structures. More recently, 2016 saw the completion of Cathedral Court - the first significant addition to an English Cathedral for over 500 years.

The extension includes Cathedral offices and conference centre, accommodation, the beautiful Cloister Garth gardens and Checks & Greys Café. As a catalyst for regeneration of the town centre, the area around the Cathedral was also redeveloped to include a public area - the Cathedral Quarter - featuring offices, restaurants and a hotel.

This living, breathing building continues to change and evolve, yet since becoming a cathedral in 1926, this building has stood as a beacon of faith and fellowship at the heart of the Diocese and has cherished its standing within the local and wider community throughout all this time.

Sue Hall, Cathedral Archivist, 2026

Welcome to This Evening's Service

Accessibility

Although there are some old, uneven surfaces and care should be taken, Blackburn Cathedral is fully accessible and wheelchair-friendly. There is level access into and around the Cathedral and there is a lift to all floors. If you have a specific need, please speak to a steward who will be pleased to help you.

Toilets can be found on the lower ground floor, accessed by the staircase or lift located in Temple Gallery, beyond the South Transept.

Throughout the service, British Sign Language interpretation will be positioned at the front of the Nave.

An induction loop for people who are hard of hearing is available during the service. Please switch your hearing aid or cochlear implant to the 'T' position.

During The Service

Please join in the congregational responses as well as saying together the words printed in **bold type**. Where '*sit*' or '*stand*' are indicated in red, these are given as a guide only, please adopt the posture that is most comfortable for you.

Holy Communion

All are warmly invited to receive Holy Communion or a blessing. Gluten free wafers are available - please tell the priest if you need one. If, for any reason you are uncomfortable receiving communion from the chalice, we ask you for reasons of hygiene not to intinct (dip the wafer) in the chalice or hold the bowl of the chalice, but to receive in one kind; Holy Communion is received fully in either the wafer or the chalice.

If you do not wish to take communion but would like to receive a blessing, please come forward bringing this order of service with you.

Livestreaming

This service will be livestreamed, filmed and official photographs will be taken. For licensing and safeguarding reasons, photography and sound recording of any kind is not permitted. Please ensure that all mobile devices are switched off.

Safeguarding Information

The welfare of everyone, including children, young people and vulnerable adults, is our overriding priority. We are committed to providing a safe environment for those who wish to worship, visit or contribute to any of the Cathedral's activities.

The Cathedral Designated Safeguarding Leads are Alex Barnes and Gill Broom who can be contacted at safeguarding@blackburncathedral.co.uk Further safeguarding information can be found online at **blackburncathedral.com/safeguarding** where you can also report a concern.

If any person is at immediate risk of harm, always call 999.

Collection

A collection will be taken during the service to support the mission and upkeep of Blackburn Cathedral. Please give what you prayerfully can on the collection plate or donate via the electronic donation points as you leave. If you are a UK taxpayer, please use a blue Gift Aid envelope so that we may reclaim the tax paid on your donation, increasing the value of your gift by 25%.

Emergency Procedure

In the event of an emergency, you are requested to remain in your seat and await further instructions. Please pay close attention to announcements and follow the guidance of stewards.

Welcome to This Evening's Service

It is traditional at Blackburn Cathedral for historic and major events to take place within a eucharistic context.

Bishops of Blackburn are usually enthroned in a Communion Service and the nave was rehallowed after restoration in 1965 in the midst of a Communion Service.

Today the rite used is the Cathedral Eucharist as it is conducted each Sunday at Blackburn Cathedral. This evening:

The President and Preacher is
The Rt Revd Philip North
Bishop of Blackburn

The Deacon is
The Revd Mark Yates
Assistant Curate, Chorley St Laurence and Chorley St Peter

The Subdeacon is
Dr Diane Warner

The service is sung by
The Cathedral Choir and **The Cathedral Youth Choir**
accompanied by **Prince Bishops Brass**

Directed by
Mr John Robinson
Director of Music, Blackburn Cathedral

The Organist is
Mr Nigel Spooner
Associate Organist, Blackburn Cathedral

The setting for the service is **A Blackburn Mass by James Davy**

Readings
The readings in this service are the same readings
that were used at the initiation of the Diocese in 1926.

The Music Before The Service

Before the service, the Cathedral bells are rung and the worship band from St. Andrew's Church, Leyland, will play.

The Music of The Service

Some of the hymns and the anthem in this service have been chosen for their historical significance and their connections to both the Diocese and Cathedral.

Christ is Made The Sure Foundation
Sung during the re-hallowing of the Cathedral's restored nave on 6th October 1965, in the presence of Her Royal Highness The Princess Margaret, Countess of Snowdon.

The God of Earth
Composed for this service by Martin Bussey, setting the words of the poem 'An Hour With Nature and With Night' written by Blackburn poet William Billington (1825-1884).

Lord For The Years
This widely acclaimed 20th-century hymn featured in a BBC 'Songs of Praise' broadcast from Blackburn Cathedral in 2003 and at many other diocesan celebrations. It has also been used for major national events, including Queen Elizabeth II's Golden Jubilee in 2002.

Lord of The Dance
Highly celebrated, energetic choral arrangement composed by John Bertalot, Organist Emeritus of Blackburn Cathedral.

God Be In My Head
Composed by Herman Brearley who served as the first Blackburn Cathedral Organist. It was sung at the enthronement of the Rt Revd Percy Mark Herbert, on 28th February 1927.

Pre-Service Processions

Diocesan Procession

Diocesan and Visiting Clergy
Area Deans

Mayoral Procession

The Mayors of the Boroughs of Lancashire

Civic Procession

Members of Parliament for Blackburn and Rossendale and Darwen
Chairman of Lancashire County Council
Representative of Lancashire Constabulary
His Majesty's Coroner

Mace Bearer
Mayor and Mayoress of Blackburn with Darwen

High Sheriff of Lancashire
Lord Lieutenant's Cadets
His Majesty's Lord Lieutenant of Lancashire and Mr Robert Parker, DL

Cathedral Procession

Crucifer and Acolytes
Cathedral Choir and Cathedral Youth Choir
~ Virger ~
Canons Emeriti
Lay Canons
Honorary Canons
Ecumenical Canons
~ Virger ~
Cathedral Chapter
Residentiary Canons
~ Virger ~
Bishop's Leadership Team
Archdeacons Emeriti
Assistant Archdeacons
Archdeacons of Blackburn and Lancaster
~ Head Virger ~
Deans Emeriti
Visiting Deans
The Interim Dean of Blackburn
~ Virger ~
Ecumenical Guests
Former Bishops of Lancaster and Burnley
Former Bishops of Blackburn
Honorary Assistant Bishops
Visiting Bishops
Bishops of Chester and Manchester
Bishops of Lancaster and Burnley
~ Virger ~
Subdeacon
Deacon
The Bishop of Blackburn
Bishop's Chaplain

The Gathering

The Welcome

Before the service, the congregation is welcomed by
The Revd Canon Andrew Horsfall, Interim Dean of Blackburn

The Acclamation

Please stand as the Acclamation begins,
led by the Bishops of Chester and Manchester

The Bishop of Chester says

We gather as God's people, God's temple.
The Spirit of God dwells among us.

The Bishop of Manchester says

For one hundred years, servants of Christ have planted and watered.
But it is God who gives the growth.

The Bishop of Chester says

Christ has been our sure foundation,
and remains our hope for the century ahead.
We build together in faith, love and joyful service.

The Bishop of Manchester says

Come, let us give thanks, alleluia, alleluia!
All for Jesus. Alleluia, alleluia!

Processional Hymn

Please remain standing to sing the processional hymn,
during which the procession makes its way into the Cathedral

CHRIST IS MADE THE SURE FOUNDATION

Christ is made the sure foundation,
And the precious corner-stone,
Who, the two walls underlying,
Bound in each, binds both in one,
Holy Sion's help for ever,
And her confidence alone.

All that dedicated city,
Dearly loved by God on high,
In exultant jubilation
Pours perpetual melody,
God the One, in Threefold glory,
Singing everlastingly.

To this temple, where we call thee,
Come, O Lord of hosts, today;
With thy wonted loving-kindness,
Hear thy people as they pray;
And thy fullest benediction
Shed within its walls for ay.

Here vouchsafe to all thy servants
Gifts of grace by prayer to gain,
Here to have and hold for ever
Those good things their prayers obtain,
And hereafter, in thy glory,
With thy blessèd ones to reign.

Laud and honour to the Father,
Laud and honour to the Son,
Laud and honour to the Spirit,
Ever Three, and ever One:
One in love, and one in splendour,
While unending ages run. Amen.

Latin, c.7th century
Tr. John Mason Neale (1818-66), 1851

The Greeting

Please remain standing as the Bishop of Blackburn greets the congregation

In the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

Peace be with you
and also with you.

The Bishop of Blackburn introduces the celebration

The Centenary Prayer

Please remain standing to say the Diocesan Centenary Prayer

Heavenly Father,
in our Centenary year
we rededicate ourselves and our Diocese to you.
Send the Holy Spirit to give us
confidence in our witness,
generosity in our service,
and love for our neighbours,
that your Church may be renewed
and many come home to you,
through your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen.

The Prayers of Penitence

Please remain standing as the deacon says

As we give thanks for a hundred years of grace, we also acknowledge our need of God's mercy. Paul teaches that we are God's field and God's building, called to build only on the foundation of Jesus Christ. Let us confess the ways we have not lived as God's holy temple, trusting in the Lord who renews and restores.

Lord Jesus, you call us to be servants who plant and water faithfully, yet we have laboured in our own strength and sought our own glory:
Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you are the one foundation on which your Church is built, yet we have trusted other foundations and followed other paths:
Christ, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you make us your holy temple, but we have not honoured your presence among us in our actions, our words, and our common life:
Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

The Bishop of Blackburn pronounces God's forgiveness

Almighty God,
who forgives all who truly repent,
have mercy upon you,
pardon and deliver you from all your sins,
confirm and strengthen you in all goodness,
and keep you in life eternal;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

The Gloria

The choir sings the refrain first which is then repeated by all and sung again after each section as indicated

Glory to God in the highest,
and peace to his people on earth.

Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father,
we worship you, we give you thanks,
we praise you for your glory.

Glory to God in the highest,
and peace to his people on earth.

Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,
Lord God, Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world: have mercy on us.
You are seated at the right hand of the Father:
receive our prayer.

Glory to God in the highest,
and peace to his people on earth.

For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord,
For you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God
in the glory of God the Father.

Glory to God in the highest,
and peace to his people on earth.
Amen.

The Collect

The Bishop of Blackburn says

Let us pray

Silence is kept, after which he prays

Almighty God,
to whose glory we celebrate the centenary
of the Diocese of Blackburn:
we praise you for the many blessings
you have given to those who worship you here:
and we pray that all who seek you may find you,
and, being filled with the Holy Spirit,
may become a living temple acceptable to you;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
Amen.

Please sit for the reading of Scripture

The Liturgy of the Word

New Testament Reading

1 Corinthians 3.5-17

Read by Mrs Amanda Parker JP
His Majesty's Lord Lieutenant of Lancashire

A reading from the first letter of Paul to the Corinthians.

What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you came to believe, as the Lord assigned to each. I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. The one who plants and the one who waters have a common purpose, and each will receive wages according to the labour of each. For we are God's servants, working together; you are God's field, God's building.

According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building on it. Each builder must choose with care how to build on it. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ.

Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw - the work of each builder will become visible, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each has done. If what has been built on the foundation survives, the builder will receive a reward. If the work is burned, the builder will suffer loss; the builder will be saved, but only as through fire.

Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy that person. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple.

This is the word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

The Anthem

Please remain seated as the choir sings

THE GOD OF EARTH

I stood upon a steep cloud-haunted hill,
When clear and cloudless was the evening sky;
As bliss fills Heaven, did sacred silence fill
The wide-womb'd welkin; universal space
Throbbed with o'erfulness of the Deity;
A range of giant hills enringed me round,
Like statues round a monument, that keep
Untiring watch while Time sweeps past age-crown'd,
And, bowed in homage, ever watch and weep;
As Ocean to the Moon, my heart did leap
With tidal impulse surging up to Heaven;
I fell his spirit-home is in the deep
Dim starry distance, despite man's earth-leaven.
'Neath burning, cloud-built battlements, which flanked
Earth's utmost boundary like a wall of fire,
With golden towers and lightning-bastions pranked,
And castles kinged with many a flaming spire,
The darkened heavens were flushed with flaming spheres,
As dewdrops numberless! And God, the God
Of earth, is God of all those dark and bright
Unfathomable deeps, where wildest flight
Of human fancy fails!
For Night is God's own Bard Oh! how I envy Night!

Martin Bussey (b.1958), 2026

The Gospel

John 15.1-17

The Gospel procession moves to the centre of the aisle
Please stand and turn to face the Gospel as the Acclamation is sung

Alleluia, alleluia.
We are God's temple,
and the Spirit dwells among us.
Alleluia.

The deacon says

The Lord be with you
and also with you.
Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.
Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus said to his disciples "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine-grower. He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you."

"My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete. This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father."

"You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another."

This is the Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

An organ fanfare is played as the deacon returns the Book of the Gospels to the altar

The Sermon

Please sit as The Bishop of Blackburn, Rt Revd Philip North, preaches

Following the sermon, there is a period of reflection during which the worship band sings

KING OF KINGS

King of kings, majesty,
God of heaven living in me;
Gentle Saviour, closest friend,
Strong deliv'rer, beginning and end,
All within me falls at Your throne.

Your majesty, I can but bow
I lay my all before You now.
In royal robes I don't deserve
I live to serve Your majesty.

Earth and heav'n worship You
Love eternal, faithful and true,
Who bought the nations, ransomed souls,
Brought this sinner near to Your throne;
All within me cries out in praise.

Jarrod Cooper (b.1970), 1996

Affirmation and Rededication

Please stand with the bishops to affirm our faith and rededicate ourselves in Christ's service, as the Bishop of Blackburn says

God has planted and nurtured his Church in this Diocese
for a hundred years.
Let us affirm our faith and renew our calling in Christ - all for Jesus.

The Bishop of Lancaster says

Do you believe that Jesus Christ is our sure foundation
and commit yourselves to follow him in faith and hope?
We do, all for Jesus.

The Bishop of Burnley says

Do you welcome the Holy Spirit who dwells among us
and equips us for God's mission?
We do, all for Jesus.

The Bishop of Lancaster says

Will you offer yourselves as living stones in God's building,
serving with joy and working together for the growth of
Christ's kingdom?
With the help of God, we will - all for Jesus.

The Bishop of Burnley says

Will you seek Christ's peace, honouring his presence in one
another and building up the unity he gives?
With the help of God, we will - all for Jesus.

The Bishop of Blackburn says

May God who has sustained his people here renew us in faith,
unite us in love, and send us out in the power of the Spirit.
Amen. All for Jesus.

The Prayers of Intercession

Please kneel or sit

The prayers are led by The Revd Canon Cindy Rigney, Teeman Zaki, Lydia Cheeseman, Susan Willoughby and David Collinge DL

Lord in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Merciful Father,
accept these prayers
for the sake of your Son
our Saviour, Jesus Christ.
Amen.

The Liturgy of the Sacrament

The Peace

Please stand as the Bishop of Blackburn says

For one hundred years God has given the growth,
building us into one people in Christ.
Let us welcome his peace, which strengthens our life together.

The peace of the Lord be always with you.
and also with you.

The deacon invites the congregation to share the peace with each other saying

Let us offer one another a sign of peace.

All may exchange a sign of peace

Offertory Hymn

Please remain standing to sing the offertory hymn,
during which bread and wine is placed on the altar

Please give what you prayerfully can on the collection plate
or donate via the electronic donation points as you leave

LORD FOR THE YEARS

Lord, for the years your love has kept and guided,
urged and inspired us, cheered us on our way,
sought us and saved us, pardoned and provided:
Lord of the years, we bring our thanks today.

Lord, for that word, the word of life which fires us,
speaks to our hearts and sets our souls ablaze,
teaches and trains, rebukes us and inspires us:
Lord of the word, receive Your people's praise.

Lord, for our land in this our generation,
spirits oppressed by pleasure, wealth and care:
for young and old, for commonwealth and nation,
Lord of our land, be pleased to hear our prayer.

Lord, for our world when we disown and doubt him,
loveless in strength, and comfortless in pain,
hungry and helpless, lost indeed without him:
Lord of the world, we pray that Christ may reign.

Lord for ourselves; in living power remake us -
self on the cross and Christ upon the throne,
past put behind us, for the future take us:
Lord of our lives, to live for Christ alone.

Timothy Dudley-Smith (1926-2024), 1967

Prayer at the Preparation of the Table

Please remain standing as the Bishop of Blackburn prays

Lord, teach us how to repay you
for your goodness towards us.
We will lift up the cup of salvation
and call upon your name.
Amen.

Eucharistic Prayer

The Bishop of Blackburn, standing at the altar, sings

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.
We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give thanks and praise.

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,
always and everywhere to give you thanks,
holy Father, almighty and eternal God.
For you have gathered a people in this place
and throughout the Diocese of Blackburn,
building us on the one foundation, Jesus Christ.
Through many who planted and watered,
you have given the growth
and made us your dwelling by the Spirit.
For a hundred years you have sustained your Church here:
in word proclaimed, in sacraments celebrated,
in lives offered in service and witness.
You have shaped us as living stones,
fashioned into one building of grace,
a dwelling for your glory
and a sign of your kingdom in Lancashire.
And so, with angels and archangels,
and with all the company of heaven,
we lift our voices to proclaim your praise
and join in their unending hymn:

Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of pow'r and might,
heav'n and earth are full of your glory,
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.

Lord, you are holy indeed, the source of all holiness;
grant that by the power of your Holy Spirit,
and according to your holy will, these gifts of bread and wine
may be to us the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ;

who, in the same night that he was betrayed,
took bread and gave you thanks;
he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;
do this in remembrance of me.

In the same way, after supper
he took the cup and gave you thanks;
he gave it to them, saying:
Drink this, all of you;
this is my blood of the new covenant,
which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

The deacon says

Great is the mystery of faith:
Christ has died:
Christ is risen:
Christ will come again.

The Bishop of Blackburn continues with the prayer

And so, Father, calling to mind his death on the cross,
his perfect sacrifice made once for the sins of the whole world;
rejoicing in his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension,
and looking for his coming in glory,
we celebrate this memorial of our redemption.

As we offer you this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving,
we bring before you this bread and this cup
and we thank you for counting us worthy
to stand in your presence and serve you.

Send the Holy Spirit on your people
and gather into one in your kingdom
all who share this one bread and one cup,
so that we, in the company of Blessed Mary,
St Paul and all the saints,
may praise and glorify you for ever,
through Jesus Christ our Lord;
by whom, and with whom, and in whom,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all honour and glory be yours, almighty Father,
for ever and ever.
Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Please remain standing as the Bishop of Blackburn invites the congregation to join in the Lord's Prayer saying

Rejoicing as the family of God in the Diocese of Blackburn,
let us pray as our Saviour has taught us.

Our Father,
who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen.

The Breaking of the Bread

The president breaks the consecrated bread, saying

We break this bread
to share in the body of Christ.
Though we are many, we are one body,
because we all share in one bread.

Agnus Dei

The congregation sings

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy upon us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy upon us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world,
grant us peace.

The Giving of Communion

The president invites the congregation
to receive communion with these words

Jesus is the Lamb of God,
who takes away the sin of the world.
Blessed are those who are called to his supper.
Lord, I am not worthy to receive you,
but only say the word, and I shall be healed.

Please sit

To receive communion please follow the guidance of the stewards

During Communion

The choir sings

LORD OF THE DANCE

I danc'd in the morning when the world was begun,
I danc'd in the moon and the stars and the sun,
I came down from heaven and I danc'd on the earth,
At Bethlehem I had my birth.
Dance, then, wherever you may be,
For I am the Lord of the dance, said he,
And I'll lead you all, wherever you may be,
And I'll lead you all in the dance, said he.
I danc'd for the scribe and the Pharisee,
But they would not dance and they wouldn't follow me,
I danced for the fishermen, for James and for John,
They came with me and the dance went on.
I danc'd on the Sabbath and I cured the lame;
The holy people said it was a shame,
They whipped and they stripped and they hung me high,
And left me there on a cross to die.
They cut me down and I leapt up high;
I am the life that'll never, never die;
I'll live in you if you'll live in me:
I am the Lord of the dance, said he.

Sydney Carter (1915-2004), 1963
Arr. John Bertalot (1931-2026), 1980

GOD BE IN MY HEAD

God be in my head, and in my understanding;
God be in my eyes, and in my looking;
God be in my mouth, and in my speaking;
God be in my heart, and in my thinking;
God be at my end, and at my departing.

Herman Brearley (1905-1940), 1926

Communion Hymn

Please stand to sing the communion hymn

LIVING HOPE

How great the chasm that lay between us,
How high the mountain I could not climb,
In desperation, I turned to heaven
And spoke Your name into the night.
Then through the darkness, Your loving-kindness
Tore through the shadows of my soul.
The work is finished, the end is written;
Jesus Christ, my living hope.

Who could imagine so great a mercy?
What heart could fathom such boundless grace?
The God of ages stepped down from glory
To wear my sin and bear my shame.
The cross has spoken, I am forgiven;
The King of kings calls me His own.
Beautiful Saviour, I'm Yours forever,
Jesus Christ, my living hope.

Hallelujah, praise the One who set me free.
Hallelujah, death has lost its grip on me.
You have broken every chain,
There's salvation in Your name;
Jesus Christ, my living hope.

Then came the morning that sealed the promise
Your buried body began to breathe
Out of the silence, the Roaring Lion
Declared the grave has no claim on me
Then came the morning that sealed the promise
Your buried body began to breathe
Out of the silence, the Roaring Lion
Declared the grave has no claim on me
Jesus, Yours is the victory!

Phil Wickham (b.1984) and Brian Johnson (b.1978), 2018

Prayer after Communion

Silence is kept

Please stand with the president who says

Let us pray

Father in heaven,
whose Church on earth is a sign of your heavenly peace,
an image of the new and eternal Jerusalem:
grant to us in the days of our pilgrimage
that, fed with the living bread of heaven,
and united in the body of your Son,
we may be the temple of your presence,
the place of your glory on earth,
and a sign of your peace in the world;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

The congregation says together

Almighty God,
we thank you for feeding us
with the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ.
Through him we offer you our souls and bodies
to be a living sacrifice.
Send us out
in the power of your Spirit
to live and work
to your praise and glory.
Amen.

Closing Hymn

Please stand to sing the closing hymn

ALL FOR JESUS

All for Jesus! all for Jesus!
This our song shall ever be;
For we have no hope, nor Saviour
If we have not hope in thee.

All for Jesus! thou wilt give us
Strength to serve thee, hour by hour:
None can move us from thy presence
While we trust thy love and power.

All for Jesus! at thine altar
Thou dost give us sweet content;
There, dear Saviour, we receive thee
In thy holy sacrament.

All for Jesus! thou hast loved us,
All for Jesus! thou hast died,
All for Jesus! thou art with us,
All for Jesus, glorified!

All for Jesus! All for Jesus!
This the Church's song shall be,
Till at last the flock is gathered
One in love, and one in thee.

W. J. Sparrow-Simpson (1859-1952), 1887

The Blessing

Please stand as the Bishop of Blackburn pronounces God's blessing on the congregation

God the Father, who gives the growth,
send you out in courage and compassion
to bear his goodness into every community you serve.
Amen.

God the Son, our one foundation,
strengthen you in word and deed
to proclaim his gospel with joy and steadfast hope.
Amen.

God the Holy Spirit,
equip you with every gift you need
for the mission entrusted to us in this generation.
Amen.

And the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always.
Amen.

The Dismissal

The deacon says

Go in the peace of Christ.
Thanks be to God.

The Voluntary

Toccata from Organ Symphony No. 5 in F Minor, Op. 42 No. 1

Charles-Marie Widor, (1844-1937), 1879
Arr. Rupert Keeling (b.1972) for Organ and Brass Quintet

Members of the congregation are kindly requested to remain in their seat until directed to move by the stewards

More About The Diocese of Blackburn

The Foundation of the Diocese of Blackburn

The Diocese of Blackburn, in the Province of York, was taken out of the Diocese of Manchester in 1926, when Percy Mark Herbert was appointed Bishop.

The Diocese of Manchester was taken out of the Diocese of Chester in 1847, when James Prince Lee was appointed Bishop.

The Diocese of Chester was taken out of the Dioceses of Lichfield and York in 1541, when John Bird was appointed Bishop.

The Diocese of Lichfield, which may have been a survival of an ancient British Diocese, was founded (or re-founded) by the English in 656, when Diuma was appointed Bishop.

The Diocese of York was in existence in the year 314. It was re-founded by the English in 627, when Paulinus was appointed Bishop.

The Diocese Today

The Diocese of Blackburn consists of the two Archdeaconries: Blackburn and Lancaster, which are each divided into seven Deaneries:

Blackburn Archdeaconry

Accrington, Blackburn with Darwen, Burnley, Chorley, Leyland, Pendle and Whalley.

Lancaster Archdeaconry

Blackpool, Garstang, Kirkham Lancaster and Morecambe, Poulton, Preston and Tunstall.

The population of the Diocese is around 1.4 million and there are 170 benefices, 224 parishes, and 278 churches / licensed worship centres within the diocese. Blackburn Diocesan Board of Education is responsible for 191 church schools and the largest number (144) of voluntary aided schools of any diocese in the country.


THE
DIOCESE
OF
BLACKBURN.
A Scale of 10 Miles.
Leven Sand.
Ken Sand.
File Sands.
Walney I.
Lancaster
Wiersdale Forest
Bowland Forest
Garstang
Kirkham
Preston
Blackburn
Colne
Burnley
Clitheroe
Preston Sand.
Sand
the brigantes.
WEST DARBYE HUNDRED
SALFORD HUNDRED.
Manchester
Barbe S.
Leverpole
Liverpool
PART OF YORK SHIRE
PART OF DARBY SHIRE.
PART OF CHESHIRE
THE IRISH SEA

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