Archdeacon’s warm welcome from Diocese

The Venerable David Picken is our new Archdeacon of Lancaster, following his recent ‘Installation and Collation Service’ at Blackburn Cathedral.

- See the Diocesan website for a longer report and more pictures
- Bishop Philip, Bishop Jill, Archdeacon Mark, Dean Peter and the Cathedral Canons were all in attendance and the service featured the Cathedral Girls’ Choir and the Choir of Ripley St Thomas Church of England Academy.
- The new Archdeacon of Lancaster will have responsibility for working with and for young people in the Diocese; particularly as the new Chair of the Diocesan Board of Education.
- Archdeacon David said: “It’s wonderful to begin my public ministry in the Diocese here in the cathedral. I am grateful to all who made today happen. Now I’m keen to get started across the Diocese, getting to know everyone in our parishes the length and breadth of the County and Archdeacon’s warm welcome from Diocese”

Bishop Julian in the House of Lords See back page

Welcoming Archdeacon David

enabling healthy churches transforming communities.”

Others who attended the service included Area Deans; clergy and parishioners from across the County; civic dignitaries from many Lancashire councils as well as visitors and supporters from Southwell and Nottingham Diocese, where David was previously Archdeacon of Newark, including Rt Rev. Tony Porter, Bishop of Sherwood.

During The Address to the congregation, Archdeacon David thanked everyone for the warm welcome he and his wife Cathy had received and anticipated all that was to come saying: “Jesus brings life in all its fullness so lives are transformed; He is our inspiration and our everything. Whatever I do it’s because of Jesus. So, let’s be committed to growing together in our faith and to the common good of all our communities.”

Bishop Julian said: “David brings a wealth of experience to his new role. It’s great we now have a full team and it has been wonderful to see the warm welcome David and Cathy have had this evening.”

David’s fellow Archdeacon, The Venerable Mark Ireland, Archdeacon of Blackburn added: “David brings huge experience as an Archdeacon to the Diocese and this, combined with his Catholic spirituality and openness to the Holy Spirit will ensure he will make a special contribution. I look forward to working with him.”

Meanwhile, on the Sunday after his Installation there was a further opportunity to welcome David at a special Archdeaconry Welcome Service at Lancaster Priory.
Along with a gang of others, I spent a chunk of February memorising the structure of St Mark’s Gospel ready for The Mark Drama presentations in the Cathedral.

And I was forcibly struck once again by the first direction Jesus gives to his hearers. ‘Repent!’

As we keep the season of Lent, that is a word that should be echoing in our ears. This holy season is one that calls us to honest reflection on our lives. It is time to listen to Jesus and respond.

The trouble is that repentance has become deeply unfashionable. We live in a blame culture where we are encouraged to point the finger at others rather than accept responsibility ourselves.

Apology and regret are seen as signs of weakness rather than honesty. People don’t like to think of themselves as sinners in need of God’s grace.

And this is all compounded by the unremitting jollity of so much western Christianity. We’re fine with pancakes, with a bit of lifestyle fasting (always good for the figure) and maybe a cheery Lent group. But when it comes to the harder edge of Lent, to honest reflection on our lives, we’re not quite as comfortable.

But repentance is not an optional extra. Sin has separated us from God and we have absolutely no power over ourselves to do anything about it. Only by admitting need and confronting sin in our own lives can we access the grace of God in Christ. Without repentance there is no salvation, no new life, no hope, no future.

Moreover, repentance is good for us. It makes us better people; it helps us reflect on decisions; it challenges us to grow in virtue; it enables us to make difficult relationships work.

So, this Lent, hear the hard invitation of Jesus and repent. Take time to reflect on your life. Name and confront sin. Acknowledge your absolute dependence on Jesus and on his cross, which is the world’s only hope.

You may want to do that in the solitude and privacy of private prayer. For others, Lent is a season when they make personal confession to a priest and hear spoken to them wonderful words of forgiveness and life.

But all who take it seriously will find that repentance is not about guilt and shame. It is a beautiful opportunity to find a fresh start, to grow in faith and to experience the rich joy of the Gospel.

‘Turn away from sin, be faithful to the Gospel.’ Those words are spoken by the priest as ashes are placed on foreheads on Ash Wednesday. Let’s take them to heart so that our hearts may be renewed in readiness for the Easter Feast.

The Archbishop of York says he is ‘looking forward to returning to Lancashire’ for his final official visit to our Diocese on March 26.

The Most Rev and Rt Hon Dr John Sentamu will be with us for the whole day.

We want to use his presence to the full to enjoy his amazing gifts as an evangelist and a teacher of the faith.

During the day the Archbishop will make a series of pre-planned visits around the Diocese. These visits will be with specific groups and at selected locations, such as meeting with school pupils and having lunch with our Curates and Pioneer Ministers. They are being coordinated through Bishop’s House.

Meanwhile, in the evening at 7.30pm, we will be holding an event at Blackburn Cathedral which will be ideal either for those new to the faith or for people who want to bring along a friend in order to introduce them to faith in Jesus Christ. Bring a friend!

Although this evening event is free and open to anybody, booking is essential and can be done via the Eventbrite page for the evening, which is accessed via the Diocesan website events calendar.

If you don’t have access to a computer you can book your place(s) by calling Louise Hunter on 01254 503087.

The Archbishop of York, Dr John Sentamu said: “I am looking forward to returning to visit the Diocese of Blackburn. When I came as part of the Crossroads Northern Bishops’ Mission in 2016 I enjoyed meeting and spending time with the people of Lancashire.

“My hope is that I will find that the Diocesan Vision 2026: Healthy Churches Transforming Communities is taking hold, and more and more people are captivated by the Good News of Jesus Christ; who came to bring new hope and new life to all those who believe and trust in him.”

New Canon Theologian

Rev. Canon Professor Jenn Strawbridge is our new Canon Theologian.

Jenn, who was installed recently as a Canon in Blackburn Cathedral and delivered her inaugural lecture immediately after the service, is Associate Professor in New Testament Studies at Oxford University based at Mansfield College.

She continues in that important role while fulfilling her new responsibilities as Canon Theologian.

Bishop Julian said: “Jenn delivered three excellent lectures at our Diocesan conference ‘The Mystery of Faith’ in November 2018, which prompted a number in the Diocese to wonder whether she could be approached to fulfil this role.”

Jenn said: “I am grateful to the Bishop of Blackburn and delighted by this invitation. It is a great honour to serve as Canon Theologian, especially after the wonderful few days at the vibrant Diocesan Conference in 2018, and I very much look forward to getting to know the Diocese more fully.”

More coverage of this story at www.blackburn.anglican.org
Diocesan News

Whalley Abbey has a full 2020 programme of residential retreats and spirituality days for all, as well as quiet days for clergy. The full programme can be found on the ‘Whalley Abbey’ page of www.blackburn.anglican.org to read and to download. Archdeacon Mark says: “I would encourage everyone to book into one of these events as we have organised, or simply contact the Abbey direct to ask if you can come on your own on another date.” The Abbey office email is office@whalleyabbey.org or phone on 01254 828400.

If parishes want to be sure of offering a clear welcome into their church building, pre-designed welcome banners can still be ordered for inside or outside your buildings. Many churches now have one of the banners or a pop-up stand alternative. The vinyl, weather-proof, external banner is £45 and internal pop-up banner is £99. Email karen.ashcroft@blackburn.anglican.org if you are interested, and to order.

Do you get the popular new Diocesan Parish Update ebulletin? This popular ebulletin is sent to all clergy and officeholders across the Diocese via ‘MailChimp’, but anyone who wants it can get it. Just email karen.ashcroft@blackburn.anglican.org to be added to the recipient list. Parish Update features specific help, advice and information and resources from the Diocesan staff teams.

Forthcoming events

Following the success of our Diocesan cricket side last year in the Church Times Cup there are several net sessions planned soon which are open to all: male and female, ordained and lay, beginners or more experienced. The Church Times Cup itself is open only to those who hold the Bishop’s license or work for the diocese. The venue for the net sessions is The Cricket Pad, Unit 2, Scotshaw Brook Indus Lane, Branch Rd, Blackburn BB3 0PR on Saturday 29 February, 12-2pm; Tuesday 24 March, 7-9pm and Tuesday 31 March, 7-9pm. The sessions are subsidised but guests should bring £3/£5 for refreshments and can be obtained by calling 01254 348893. All proceeds will be donated to the church.

Palm Sunday is to be held on Saturday 2 April at St Silas Church, Preston New Road, Blackburn BB2 6PS at 7.30pm. ‘The Company of Voyces’, Director Robin Stapford, will perform both sacred and secular music, reflecting Passiontide, and looking forward to Easter! Tickets £10 including refreshments. To book in advance email stsilasorganfund@email.com or by phone to Jean, 07399 617656.

St Mary the Virgin, Church Road, Rufford L40 1TA, presents Music for the Feast of St David on Friday 22 March at 7.30pm. Tickets £5. Available on the door including tea and cake. This year if you attend five concerts you can attend the sixth for free. On March 14 there is a Spirituality Day from 10am-4pm. For more information contact events@stlaurencechorley.co.uk

Mosamaria Trust Fund invite you to attend their Annual General Meeting to be held on Monday 30 March at 7.30pm, at St David’s Church, Larkholme Lane, Fleetwood FY7 8AU. If you would like more information contact Mrs Jill Burrow (Treasurer) email jillburrow@btinternet.com or John Eastwood (Chairman) email johneastwood69@icloud.com. There is also a Mosamaria website based in Bloemfontein, South Africa which is info@mosamaria.co.za or www.mosamaria.co.za

Miscellaneous

Struggling to produce your parish magazine? NorthWest Publishing has more than 25 years’ experience creating church magazines. Our design and typesetting service can work with your present printer or use our online print-partner to find the best prices. Fixed price typesetting per issue whatever size your publication. Contact: jonathan@northwestpublishing.co.uk for further information.

Clergy updates

The Rev Canon David Richard Albert Gibb, who holds the Bishop’s Permission to Officiate in the Diocese, has been appointed Assistant Curate (to be known as Associate Priest) in the Benefice of Over Wyre. The position is for a fixed period until 1 September 2020, as matroncy cover.

The Rev Shaun Baldwin, Vicar of Broughton St John the Baptist, has been appointed Vicar of Bamber Bridge St Aidan and Walton-le-Dale St Leonard (United Benefice as of 1 February 2020) and will be instituted by the Bishop of Blackburn and inducted by the Archdeacon of Blackburn on 18 March 2020 at 7.30pm at Walton-le-Dale St Leonard.

The Rev Lindsay Pearson, Assistant Curate at Chesterfield St Augustine in the Diocese of Derby, has been appointed School Chaplain of St George’s School Blackpool.

The Rev Timothy Honney Kaye, who holds the Bishop’s Permission to Officiate in the Diocese, has been appointed Curate (to be known as Associate Vicar) of Burnley St Andrew with St Margaret and Burnley St James and was licensed (for a period of 12 months) by the Bishop of Burnley on January 2020 at 2.30pm at Dean House, 449 Padham Road, Burnley BB12 1TE.

The Rev Canon Mark Soddy will be instituted by the Bishop of Blackburn and inducted by the Archdeacon of Blackburn as Rector of Rufford and Tarleton on 1 April 2020 at 7pm at Rufford St Mary.

The Rev Carol Louise Backhouse, Curate at Northallerton All Saints with Kirby Sigston in the Diocese of York, has been appointed Vicar of Lancaster Christ Church and will be instituted by the Bishop of Blackburn and inducted by the Archdeacon of Lancaster on 23 March 2020 at 7.30pm at Lancaster Christ Church.

The Rev Enid Briggs and The Rev David Allsop have been granted the Bishop’s Permission to Officiate in the Diocese.

The Rev Alan Charles George Rawe, who was retired, died on 18 December 2019. He was ordained in the Diocese of London in 1956 and served his title post there until 1959. Rev Rawe moved to the Diocese of Blackburn in 1980 following ministry in the Diocese of St Albans. Chichester and Chester, where he was Vicar of Copull Parish. In 1983 he became Chaplain with the Missions to Seamen in Felixstowe until his retirement in 1994 when he returned to Blackburn and held the Bishop’s Permission to Officiate until 2014.

The Rev Michael Buckley who was retired and held the Bishop’s Permission to Officiate in the Diocese, died on 17 December 2019. Rev Buckley was ordained in 1949 and spent all his ministry in the Diocese of Liverpool. After retiring in 2014, Michael and his wife, Ruth, moved to Longridge in Preston and he was granted the Bishop’s Permission to Officiate in the Diocese. The funeral took place at Longridge Parish Church on 30 December 2019. Michael leaves his wife Ruth and children Rachel, Katie, Peter and Anna.

The Rev Eric Keith Sills, who was retired, died on 13 January 2020. Rev Sills was ordained in the Diocese of Blackburn in 1978 and spent all his ministry in the Diocese. He served his curacy at St Stephen on the Cliffs and then took charge of St Anne Greenlands in 1979. Rev Sills was also Vicar of Huncote St Augustine (1982–1985), Vicar of St Wilfrid’s Merside (1985–1995) and Vicar of Fleetwood St David from 1995 until his retirement in 2006. He was granted the Bishop’s Permission to Officiate until 2019, when ill health prevented him from continuing his ministry. Keith leaves his wife, Barbara, and sons Andrew and Nigel.
A recent survey (‘Talking Jesus’) found that 43% of adults in England believe in the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, writes Carolyn Barton, Diocesan Vision Coordinator.

What an opportunity this presents to our churches to help people on their journey of faith!

We hold so many wonderful events that could help people with their questions; and yet, for even the bravest members of communities we worship in, churches can be daunting buildings if you’ve never been before.

It’s not surprising that, at the most recent round of Vision Champion meetings, one of the key topics of conversation was how to take the church out into the community.

With spring on the horizon, many of our communities will be planning their spring and summer fairs, community fun days, shows and carnivals.

They are wonderful opportunities to be witnesses to Jesus Christ; to share the warmth and hospitality of Christian community and to provide opportunities to meet people, make connections and begin discussions. Be creative and think about what might really bless your community.

Refreshments are a good start but what else could you offer? A prayer tent? Face painting and craft for the children? Puppet shows? Hand massage? ‘A pat dog?’ These are all tried and tested ideas. And how about having some information about your church and Christian literature available?

Undergird your planning and the day itself with prayer, praying that God would open up opportunities and that you would be His salt and light.

Bishop Julian now one of 26 ‘Lords Spiritual’

Bishop Julian is now one of 26 Church of England bishops (known as the ‘Lords Spiritual’) in the House of Lords.

He continues as our Diocesan Bishop, with Lords responsibilities forming part of his ongoing workload.

Speaking after the short ceremony, Bishop Julian said: “I have been very touched by the prayers and good wishes for my introduction into the House of Lords. To be entrusted with this privilege and responsibility is an honour which I take very seriously.

“It will no doubt take some time to become used to the workings of the Lords, to learn how much much time I should give to its agenda and what implications there are for us as a Diocese.

“I am looking forward to being a new voice for the County; to engaging in debates on matters of public interest from a Christian perspective and to joining other Lords in holding the Government of the day to account.”

Bishop Julian was supported in the Lords with members of his family watching from the gallery, including his wife Heather; and on the floor of the House itself by current Lords Spiritual, the Bishops of Carlisle and St Albans.

You can watch the full short ceremony in a video on our Diocesan YouTube channel (search online for ‘YouTube’ and ‘Blackburn Diocese’). Further reports and pictures can be found on www.blackburn.anglican.org

The video as well as the pictures on this page and the front page are taken from, and courtesy of, www.parliamentlive.tv

Amongst the many congratulations coming in for Bishop Julian there have been many from Lancashire parishes, plus schools across the Diocese as well.

The Diocesan Board of Education also asked all schools to pray for Bishop Julian on the special day. Alan Brindle, Headteacher of Heskin Pemberton’s CofE Primary School, was one of many headteachers who responded to the prayer call saying: “This is wonderful news and an amazing honour. Please pass on our congratulations from everyone here at Heskin. Bishop Julian will be in our prayers.”

Meanwhile, on a date yet to be finalised, Bishop Julian will be invited to make his first address (or ‘maiden speech’) to the House.

That speech will form part of a wider debate on the date chosen, so Bishop Julian plans to wait until there is the right opportunity to allow him to speak first on topical matters related to Lancashire.

A scene from the Lords as Bishop Julian is sworn in as a member of the House. From www.parliamentlive.tv

Great chances for outreach!

A great community fun day last year at St. Aidan Mill Hill with St. Luke, St. Mark and St. Philip, in Blackburn

Our Diocesan vision is to see ‘Healthy Churches Transforming Communities’ – so let’s make the most of these wonderful community opportunities at these key events across our Diocese!

A great way to share the Easter Story - Buy Now

The Real Easter Egg was launched in 2010, with the help of Manchester churches and schools, as a way to share the Easter story and support Fairtrade.

Ten years on, out of the 80 million Easter eggs sold in this part of the world every year, The Real Easter Egg is still the only one which has a copy of the Easter story in the box, is made of Fairtrade chocolate and which supports charitable projects.

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Deadline for the April edition is March 4, 2020

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