

Please fill in an answer to each question. Keep your answers fairly brief, ideally 2/3 sentences maximum. Please write answers directly into this file where indicated.

Your name, your age and your home village, town or city (where you grew up):

Answer: Karen Herschell, age 50, Thornton-Cleveleys.

The church in Blackburn Diocese where you are serving:

Answer: The United Benefice of Ribchester, Hurst Green and Mitton.

Tell us about your family:

Answer: I have been married to Stuart for 20 years and we have an 18 year-old son, Xander and a cat called Toby.

Former job before entering ministry?:

Answer: I have had a varied career; from being an assistant librarian, a bookseller, a civil servant, and a local government officer. My last job before leaving employment to train for ministry, was working for the charity Disability First in Blackpool, where I led a Disability Hate Crime Third Party Reporting Service, supporting and advocating for victims of hate crime.

Why did you decide to get ordained?:

Answer: The decision to get ordained was not my decision. All I have done is to step out in faith testing the call I felt God placed in me, trusting that whatever was to happen would be His will and that I was being faithful in obeying that call. I believe that God has called me to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ in our communities and especially to those who live in the margins; who are bound by their circumstances, who need healing in mind, body and spirit and freeing from the oppression of injustice.

What's been the best thing about your training?:

Answer: Training has been such a precious gift in many ways; however, learning together and from each other has been so formative and supportive both at college and on church placement. College residentials have been an amazing time of learning and fellowship, and I loved the opportunity I had to work in Prison Chaplaincy on short-term placement last summer.

What's the most important thing you have learned so far?:

Answer: That God can 'do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us.' (Ephesians 3:20). When I came to faith, from being an atheist, 15 years ago this year, I would never have dreamt that this was God's plan and that I would love and serve Him in this way. It's hugely humbling and also very exciting as I look forward to curacy.

Can you name the most influential person in your Christian life to date and, briefly, say why?

Answer: This is a hard one, there are so many, but I would say, it would be Steve Wardle who was a group leader on the Alpha course I did 15 years ago. He listened to and answered the rather persistent challenging questions I had about the Christian faith with humility, honesty and love. His love of Jesus and care of others were a very powerful witness to me of the gospel message of love and forgiveness.

What is your hope for your future role?:

Answer: My hope is that I will continue to learn, to deepen my personal relationship with Jesus and to be His hands and feet in the parishes where I will be serving; to take the light of Christ with me, to love and minister to all and to make, encourage and equip disciples to discover their gifts and calling to serve God.

Name one thing about you people would be surprised about?:

Answer: I have always had a secret desire to work at a 'tip' and to drive a mini road sweeper! I am a keen advocate of recycling and waste management and as Christians we have an ecological responsibility to care for and tend God's creation entrusted to us

Favourite quote (from the Bible or elsewhere). Also state briefly why it is your favourite:

Answer: "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!" (Romans 10:15). This was instrumental in my journey into ministry, affirming my call to preach the good news. It was also life changing in the way I viewed my feet, because I have never liked them! However I do now, knowing that we are "fearfully and wonderfully made" (Psalm 139:14)

Unfulfilled ambition?:

Answer: I do not have any. My ambition is to always follow Jesus; that is fulfilling in itself wherever He may lead me and therefore can never be considered 'unfulfilled'.

How do you personally hope to support the ongoing Diocesan Vision 2026 Healthy Churches Transforming Communities at parish level?

Answer: I especially see myself encouraging, supporting and equipping disciples whether lay or ordained; to grow future leaders, working together as churches but also partnering with the local community at parish level. I believe in investing time and resources, undergirded by prayer, in discerning people's spiritual gifts, of having effective nurture and discipleship courses and empowering the laity especially to step out and 'give it a go' for Jesus!

How would you express your own vision for the church?:

Answer: My vision for the church is that she can become 'relevant' again to people's lives in order to move from the dangers of 'self-sufficiency' to the life-changing 'reliance' on the message of Christ's love and forgiveness; and that this becomes a transformational reality for individuals, communities and wider society for the common-good.

How do you relax?:

Answer: I'm probably at my most content and relaxed when on holiday camping in my tent. I love reading, knitting, listening to music, especially folk; and walking in the countryside. I also enjoy cooking and spending time with friends and family.