**Olivia Haines**

Your name, age and original home village, town or city (ie the place where you grew up):

**Answer: Olivia Haines, 33. I was born in Lancaster but grew up all over the UK and Germany, as my dad was a chaplain in the British Army.**

The church in Blackburn Diocese where you are serving:

**Answer: St Michael and All Angels, Cockerham with Christ Church, Glasson Dock and St Luke’s Winmarleigh**

Tell us about your family:

**Answer: I am married to Barry, who works for the NHS as a Specialist Safeguarding Practitioner. He’s originally from Yorkshire but, after a decade in Lancashire, I’ve managed to convince him he is finally on the right side of the Pennines. We have a lively 5 year-old daughter, Isobel, who loves singing, dancing and riding her bike.**

If applicable, your former job before entering ministry?:

**Answer: Before entering ministry I was a full-time mum, though I did work one day a week in a local primary school. Prior to Isobel’s birth, I was a full-time primary school teacher.**

What led you to take the steps towards ordination?:

**Answer: I had wondered about ordination for quite a while before I stepped forward but had discounted myself. I went off the rails a little in my late teens and early 20s, and I couldn’t see why or how God would want to use me in this way.**

**I remember having a conversation with the curate at our church and explaining that I was unsuitable. He told me I really wasn’t. So, after some more wrestling and lots of prayer, I finally stepped out in faith to see if ordination was what God was asking me to do.**

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

**Answer: Getting to know some amazing women and men of God, being stretched by theology and allowing myself to be formed more fully into the person God created me to be.**

Can you say what is the most important thing you have learned during your training?:

**Answer: “Be still and know that I am God.” Training and with a small child, half of which was undertaken during a global pandemic, has felt tumultuous at times. I have had to put that stillness of spirit and confidence in God’s goodness and love into practice like never before.**

Reflecting on the difficult past year, please share a few thoughts about how the pandemic has impacted on ministry at this time (you could reflect how people have adapted to the circumstances in different ways as part of this response) …

**Answer: We have all had to become much more creative and think outside the box. One of our biggest ministries at my placement church was our ministry to under 5s and their parents. We tried all sorts of things, from craft packs to Zoom stories and even quiz nights on Zoom for the parents. In the end it has come down to far more 1-1 relationships, rather than groups – something made possible by the pace of life decreasing.**

**Despite the challenges, of which there have been many, I have loved going deeper into relationships and practising intentional relationship building over the incidental relationships which build at groups. I hope we will retain some of that intentional 1-1 discipleship as life gets pacier again.**

Meanwhile, what are some of your personal reflections on ministry in the post-pandemic period that lies ahead; the challenges and the opportunities?

**Answer: I think one of the greatest challenges will be for us all to not slip back into the rushed rhythms of life pre-pandemic. There were lessons for all of us to learn about being, rather than doing. Subsequently, the Church has a great opportunity to speak into the truth of restful rhythms which a life lived with Jesus can offer. As a natural out-of-the-box thinker, I really hope we continue to take up the challenge of thinking differently about church and what it means for us to be church today.**

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

**Answer: I was a London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Gamesmaker.**

What do you view as your most significant personal achievement, before or during training?

**Answer: I started running on my 30th birthday, after being a prolific skiver of sport at school. 11 months later, I ran ‘The Wilson’, a 10.9 mile fell run with over 1600ft of uphill.**

Your favourite literary quote (it can be from the Bible or elsewhere) and, briefly, why?:

**Answer: It’s too difficult to choose just one, because different quotes speak to my heart on different days… but one I love at the moment is: ‘I am not afraid of storms, for I am learning how to sail my ship.’ This is from Little Women by Louisa May Alcott. I love sailing, though I don’t get the chance to do it anymore, and it really speaks to me of trusting God in the storms of life.**

How do you hope to continue to support the Diocesan Vision 2026 at a parish level?

**Answer: My hope is that I can continue to model everyday evangelism in my relationships and interactions, encouraging and teaching others to do the same. I hope I’ll be able to continue spending time with children and young people, encouraging them to love Jesus and seeing their faith flourish.**

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

**Answer: A family, where all people can belong, and where all people come to know Jesus and his love for them ever more deeply – through prayer, the scriptures, and social action.**

Finally, when you get the chance, how do you relax?:

**Answer: I love to run, especially on the hills, when restrictions allow.**