

The Bishops of Burnley and Lancaster
The Rt Revds Philip North and Jill Duff

To Clergy;
LLMs;
Churchwardens;
PCC Secretaries;
DBE, DBF and Cathedral staff.

Sent by email only

18th July 2022

Dear Friends,

It is with great sadness that we have said farewell to Bishop Julian over the past few weeks. His prayerful and steadfast leadership in times of great change will leave a lasting legacy on our Diocese and he and Heather depart with our thanks and prayers.

As in parishes, so in dioceses, vacancies can be unsettling but creative times. Some of you may have read our very own Mark Bradford's wonderful book 'The Space Between' in which he analyses the 'disruptive seasons' in the Bible and identifies them both as times of challenge but also as times of great growth. We pray that the next few months, with all their challenges, will likewise be times of growth across our Diocese.

We now need to give some attention to the vacancy and how best we can support each other over the next twelve months as we prepare to welcome a new Diocesan Bishop. This letter contains some key information about leadership in the Diocese and makes one very big request, which is ...

Please Pray!

By far the most important thing we can do is to pray in the next Diocesan Bishop. We would love you to pray for this in every act of worship between now and when an announcement is made. Please also make it a focus for your own private prayers. Your Parish may also wish to set aside particular times of prayer with this intention.

The Bishop's Leadership Team (of which more below) have committed to a Half Night of Prayer together before every Meeting from September until the end of the year. These will take place on the first Sunday night of every month from 7.30pm onwards. You may wish to invite your people to pray at the same time.

The Appointment Process

The appointment is made by a Crown Nominations Committee which comprises six representatives from our Diocese, six from General Synod and the two Archbishops. They will meet on November 8th and 9th to interview candidates and come to a view. This is when many of us will be away at the Diocesan Conference in Swanwick, so it will be good to be able to offer prayer together during that time. If all goes well, we can expect an announcement to follow about two months after the interviews.

Leading the Diocese

We have a clear strategic direction outlined in Vision 2026 and one which commands widespread support. There is no need therefore for sudden changes of direction during the vacancy and indeed we look forward to keeping up momentum. There will however be some changes to how leadership is exercised.

There is little point in having a Bishop's Leadership Team when there is no Diocesan Bishop! This group will therefore become the **Vision and Strategy Team**. The membership will be unchanged - the Bishops, the Dean, the Archdeacons, the Diocesan Secretary, Carolyn Barton (Director of Vision Delivery), Anne Beverley (Dean of Women's Ministry), Sam Cheesman (Bishop's Chaplain), Sarah Gill (Advisor for UKME and GMH Matters), Nick McKee (Director of Vocations), Joy Rushton (Being Witnesses Manager) and Ronnie Semley (Communications Manager). Our energies will be focussed chiefly on the wellbeing of the Diocese, the implementation of Vision 2026 and additional large scale strategic funding applications.

In the same way the Bishop's Appointment Team will become the **People and Places Team**. This group, comprising the Bishops and Archdeacons, the Diocesan Secretary, the HR Manager and the Bishop's Chaplain, will focus on vacant parishes and ensure that our clergy and staff are receiving the best possible support.

Necessarily these teams will have to step up a bit in the vacancy so please do keep them in your prayers.

Two Bishops, not Three

For at least the next year we will be a bishop down. We have never operated a formal area scheme, and from now on both Bishops work equally across the whole Diocese and will be equally available to all who need an episcopal ear or any particular support.

Bishop Philip will be acting Diocesan Bishop. He will continue to oversee the 'growing leaders' aspect of our life and will continue as Sponsoring Bishop for ordinands.

Bishop Jill will continue to oversee the 'being witnesses' strand of work. She will chair the Strategic Programme Board which oversees our SDF projects and will lead on the development of the Strategic Transitional Funding (STF) bid. She will also have oversight of chaplaincy – healthcare and prisons.

As is now the case, Archdeacon Mark will oversee the 'Making Disciples' strand of the Vision and chair the Whalley Abbey Governance Committee and Archdeacon David will continue inspiring children and young people and will also chair the Board of Education.

We are determined to continue to offer pastoral support and care to clergy and parishes and be as visible as possible in churches and schools. To assist with this we will be drawing more on the experience and gifts of the two outstanding retired bishops in our Diocese, Tony Porter and Cyril Ashton.

A concern we share is that clergy presume that their Bishops and Archdeacons are 'too busy' and so don't make contact at times when they need support or advice. **This is not the case!** There is always capacity to offer support to those who need it, so please get in touch.

The DBF and DBE

We are very grateful to Stephen Whittaker who will continue as Interim Diocesan Secretary, combining the role with that of Director of Education in order to bring cohesion and strategic clarity to these key areas in the life of the Diocese. As previously announced, Sam Johnson is moving to a new role outside of the DBE and so from September 1st until Christmas, Nick McKee will be co-opted to lead the DBE for three days a week and Stef Dnistrianskyj will cover Nick's vocational discernment and lead DDO responsibilities. During this period, please send any vocational enquires to: Stef.Dnistrianskyj@blackburn.anglican.org. A substantive DBE leadership post will be advertised shortly, with interviews in the autumn, and so please pray for this key appointment.

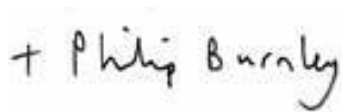
Now Pray Again!

*Heavenly Father, we pray for a bishop full of your Holy Spirit:
a disciple who makes disciples,
a bold witness to Jesus,
and a Christ-like leader,
able to inspire children and young people with the transforming message of your Gospel.
We ask this in the name of your Son, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen*

There is a prayer card available with this prayer and the Vision prayer. [Download here.](#)

Please feel free to share this letter with your parishes or chaplaincy teams as you see appropriate and you can continue to keep up with the latest news through our Parish Update ebulletin and on our Diocesan website www.blackburn.anglican.org

We both love working with the parishes, chaplaincies and schools of Lancashire and are constantly grateful for your faithfulness, compassion and dedication. This letter comes, as always, with our prayers for you.



The Rt Revd Philip North
Bishop of Burnley



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Bishop of Lancaster