

Media Questionnaire: Priests

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

Answer: Anna Walker, age 44, from Tampere, Finland.

The church in Blackburn Diocese where you are serving:

Answer: St Aidan, Bamber Bridge and St Leonard, Walton le Dale

Tell us about your family:

Answer: My husband and I married 22 years ago and have two children aged 18 and 16. I met my husband Andy in the Taize Community which continues to be a significant spiritual influence. We moved to the UK in 2008, and I trained first as a spiritual director in Cumbria and then worked as a Student Welfare Officer in Lancaster. I completed a BA at St Mellitus College in mixed mode training while working on placement at Lancaster Priory for three years. I am now completing my curacy in Preston.

If applicable, your former job before entering ministry?

Answer: Deacon in the Lutheran Church in Finland and most recently Student Welfare Officer at university in the UK.

What led you to take the steps towards ordination?

Answer: A call to deepen my deacon's vocation to serve as priest in the Church of England.

What's been the best thing about your training?

Answer: The best thing about training was being allowed the time to dedicate to reading theology and setting up good patterns of prayer and study which will hopefully continue for the rest of life. I loved sacramental and environmental theology.

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

Answer: The most important thing was probably being supported to deal with our brokenness in order to become a better servant leader with our own voice and an authentic message.

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 are still rebuilding in our parishes, limited by finances and smaller congregations. We must see this as an opportunity to do things differently and respond with new priorities.

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

Answer: Social outreach has become even more important. We see that people struggle a lot with anxiety which is related to isolation and fear and the Church needs to be creative in

forming partnerships and meeting the many needs of people holistically. It is part of the wholeness which God desires for his children. Also, the Church needs to engage with culture and keep its finger on the pulse of society to speak out for justice in ways which are accessible, relevant and noticed.

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

Answer: I have not received TV for 20 years, although I do love watching films.

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

Answer: Bringing up two wonderful children will be my most important achievement ever.

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

Answer: I hope to support others to discern their calling and equip everyone for their own kind of ministry. Deepening discipleship in this way as well as through increasing opportunity for spiritual growth and opportunities to serve is important as well as reaching out to make new disciples. We are very hopeful that we will be able to develop our welcome and provision for children and families as well, with our primary schools, Messy Church and baptism in focus.

How would you express your own vision for the church?

Answer: My vision of the Church is a spiritual community where love is lived out and everyone, inclusively, is invited to a fullness of life. This fullness is worked out by caring for each other's needs in everyday life, celebrating the joy and hope of the gospel and appreciating and caring for creation.

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

Answer: I love walking in nature, playing board games and baking.