

Media Questionnaire: Priests

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

Answer: Liz Gethin (39) born and raised in Preston

The church in Blackburn Diocese where you are serving:

Answer: St Cuthbert's Fulwood

Tell us about your family:

Answer: I am married to Dave, an engineer, and we have two young children.

If applicable, your former job before entering ministry?

Answer: I was, and still am, a Physiotherapist working within the NHS for the last 19 years.

What led you to take the steps towards ordination?

Answer: I felt that God was calling me to a ministry in my secular workplace and this calling has been affirmed and renewed through my training and diaconal year. My call to ordination was a gradual one and one that was seen by other people first. The day that I realised that God was calling me I was both terrified and excited at the same time. God showed me a picture of ministry outside of the parish structure within my existing work place and a quick Google search told me that this was called Ministry in Secular Employment (MSE). So began my journey to become an MSE: to share the Gospel in word and deed in a secular environment.

What's been the best thing about your training?

Answer: Knowing that I am in the place that God wants me to be, doing what he has called me to do: Being able to serve both the people of St Cuthbert's and Lancashire Teaching Hospitals.

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

Answer: That there is always more to learn.

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: This last year has been defined by trying to get back to a new sort of normal. The challenge has been to journey alongside people and discern a shared sense of what this new normal is. The pandemic has left people fatigued due to prolonged stress and uncertainty and mental and physical wellbeing has been severely diminished. The need for pastoral care and support across all sectors has risen dramatically and being able to work alongside lay and ordained colleagues to provide this has been a humbling experience. To see people experience the peace of God amidst the chaos that sometimes surrounds them is truly a privilege.

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

Answer: The pandemic has allowed the reimagining of how people can and do engage with church. The challenge will be to continue to evolve to meet the needs of the communities that we serve rather than to revert back to what has always been done. There is also a big opportunity to partner with secular organisations to support the health and wellbeing of those we minister to.

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

Answer: Bringing two wonderful little people into the world.

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

Answer: I hope to continue to be a witness of Christ, both within the parish and within my secular employment. To show Gods love in action through meeting the pastoral needs of those in the parish and my work place and by equipping and encouraging others, from the youngest to the oldest, to flourish in their God given skills and abilities. Fundamentally to live out the gospel in word and deed.

How would you express your own vision for the church?

Answer: That it would continue to be incarnational, showing Jesus' love for the world to those that it meets both within its parish structure and in the secular world and that the perception of a sacred/secular divide would cease to be.

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

Answer: To be out in nature, whether it be up a mountain or by the sea.