

## Media Questionnaire: Priests

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

**Answer:**

Mark Wooding, 29, from Thornton-Cleveleys in Lancashire.

The church in Blackburn Diocese where you are serving:

**Answer:**

St. John's Leyland

Tell us about your family:

**Answer:**

I left education in 2011 with several official pieces of paper and my wife to be! Jade and I got married in April 2016 and we have two lovely daughters, Leah, 5, and Charlotte, 3. Leah is just finishing her first year at school where she is flourishing. Charlotte is just about to start nursery.

If applicable, your former job before entering ministry?

**Answer:**

Before I started training for ministry, I spent a significant amount of my childhood and teenage years pursuing performing arts but was mostly interested in music which has continued into adulthood. I worked in various roles for Christ Church Thornton from youth work to ministry assistant for many years and had my own business as a ukulele teacher before beginning my ministry training at Oak Hill College in London. We spent three years down south until we moved to Leyland where we currently reside as I complete my curacy at St John's Leyland.

What led you to take the steps towards ordination?

**Answer:**

The short answer is that God kept nagging and people kept noticing!

What's been the best thing about your training?

**Answer:**

Training alongside people passionate about the same thing – God and his glory! It has been great to continue discussions with various people throughout training and build on what we have learned. This is especially true when we meet as Curates and share the riches of our traditions within Anglicanism.

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

**Answer:**

In all the new things I have learnt and experienced, especially now as I continue to learn and develop, the most important thing I hold onto is what God is like: unchanging in his perfection, faithful in his promises and overflowing with mercy and grace. Knowing and loving God is the most important thing!

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:**

Covid has obviously had a massive effect on how safe people feel and we are still seeing this on a Sunday with communion, the peace and mask wearing as three examples. People have responded in such a Christlike way as they seek the good of their brothers and sisters, even if that mean discomfort to themselves.

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 opportunities are numerous. Covid has given a chance for us to pause and reassess different aspects of our ministry; to ask the question 'is this best serving our people and community' then change our ministries accordingly. People have different needs and different hopes. We need to communicate the hope and joy found in Jesus in such a way that connects.

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

**Answer:**

I have an A\* in GCSE contemporary dance!

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

**Answer:**

See previous answer! Joking aside, my most significant personal achievement is an ongoing one; trying to be the best husband and father that I can be.

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

**Answer:**

Our youth group is a great example to show how I'm furthering all aspects of the Vision. Our youth group is called youthDOTcom; the DOT standing for Discipleship on Thursday. This is where we seek to make disciples for Jesus by inspiring our young people to disciple for themselves. It's also a brilliant opportunity to raise up and train leaders, as the leadership for this group meet to learn and explore God's word and develop as leaders. We can, therefore, successfully witness to the young people through our conversation and sharing our lives.

How would you express your own vision for the church?

**Answer:**

I would love to see the church grow in their knowledge of Jesus, their love for Jesus and their willingness and ability to share Jesus. The church should be seeking the lost and seeking their own maturity in Christ.

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

**Answer:**

During my time at Oak Hill, I learnt a few magic tricks to perform at a family event and it quickly developed into a full-blown hobby; so I like to learn and practice new tricks in my



spare time. I like to perform for people when I can and I record and upload videos to my YouTube channel from time to time. But nothing is more relaxing than going for a coffee and a cake with Jade!