

## Media Questionnaire: Matthew Gaze

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

**Answer:** I grew up in a small village called Newton Flotman in Norfolk.

The church and location in Blackburn Diocese where you are serving:

**Answer:** I am serving in St Paul's, Hoddlesden and St Barnabas' Darwen.

Tell us a bit about your family:

**Answer:** I have wonderful fiancé called Grace, and we get married late July. She is currently a curate in Bolton.

If applicable, what was your former job before entering ministry?

**Answer:** During the pandemic I worked in the wine department at Waitrose.

Tell us something about your journey towards ordination?

**Answer:** When I was just 14 years old I received a calling on my life to become a presbyter. After two years of trying my best to ignore this calling I finally began to pursue it. It then took a further four years for me to start the process towards ordination.

What has been a) the most important thing you have learned and b) the most inspiring thing you have experienced during your training? (They can be different!)

**Answer:** There is so much more to explore with God. There is so much mystery to him, and so faith should be often seen as an adventure of holiness.

As parishes continue to recover following the trauma of the pandemic, please give us some insight into how your parish is moving forward at this time (you could reflect how people have adapted and changed in the way they 'do church', including online, as part of this response).

**Answer:** I think the main thing to focus on is to bring back the 'personal' to church. Many people across the country felt a great disconnect from church life by being stuck behind a screen. So, my hope is to reconnect with those in my parish in whatever way I can.

What are some of the personal challenges and opportunities you face in your ministry in the coming year?

**Answer:** To be honest this is my first time moving to a home which is mine to live in. I've spent a long time in shared accommodation; so, for me, adapting to a more independent

way of life will give both wonderful opportunities that I've never had before, and new challenges, as I learn this new way of life.

What do you view as your most significant personal achievement? (This may be connected to your ordination training of course or it could be something else from another aspect of your life.)

**Answer:** Right now, for me, it is getting engaged to my amazing fiancé.

When he was announced recently as the next Bishop of Blackburn, Bishop Philip said: *"I am committed to continuing the growth of the church in Lancashire, helping to build joyful Christian communities. I would love to see the Church of England in Lancashire being an ever-stronger voice for justice, especially for the poorest. And I believe children and young people need to be at the very heart of all that we do."*

How would you seek to support the Bishop in fulfilling these aims?

**Answer:** In my parish I hope that with my training incumbent we can set a culture of love and laughter. One that cares for each other in hardship but also laughs with one another. In this I hope that the church would become a family of disciples who build each other up.

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

**Answer:** I can do a pretty good Gollum impression (from Lord of the Rings.) Oddly enough I doubt this will come up much in ministry.

Finally, when you get the chance, what do you do you chill out and relax?

**Answer:** I love a good board game and a good hike.