

## Media Questionnaire: Nikki Mann

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

**Answer:** I am 40 years old. I was born in Bristol and grew up in Nuneaton from the age of 8.

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

**Answer:** I am serving my curacy at St. Luke's Skerton and St. Chad's Skerton, Lancaster.

Tell us a bit about your family:

**Answer:** I have a husband, Leslie, and we have been married for 16 years. We have one son, Alex, who is 8 years old.

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

**Answer:** Before training for ordination, I was Head of Religious Education in a Church of England secondary school.

Tell us something about your journey towards ordination?

**Answer:** A sense of God's calling to ministry was something that had been with me since I was a teenager. I spent many years of my adult life exploring ways of living out God's calling through my career and through various voluntary lay roles within the churches I attended. In the end I felt that none of these had fully answered what God was calling me to do and so after a number of conversations, including questions about ordination from people known to me and those who I had only recently met, I decided to explore ordained ministry.

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:** The most important thing I have learned has been a clearer understanding of what it means to rely on God rather than attempt to do everything in my own strength. I have learned (and am still learning) what it means to abide in Him and live and minister from a place of being rooted in Christ, being attentive to the work, promptings, and guidance of the Holy Spirit in myself and others and working collectively with others to build God's Kingdom on earth. The most inspiring thing I have experienced during my training has been hearing people's stories of faith in the face of all manner of life experiences, stories of hope and stories of how God is at work in the lives of individuals and communities.

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:** It has been wonderful to see the parishes I am working in move forward from the restrictions of the pandemic, seeing the joy for many of returning to meeting in person, sharing the peace without being socially distanced and bringing back some of the aspects of in-person church that have been greatly missed. At the same time, I am very mindful that for some in the parishes I work in, returning to in-person meeting is not possible for them for a variety of reasons and it has been heartening to see the willingness of people within the parish to consider how to help the people this applies to, to remain feeling a part of our church communities and engaged with parish life as far as possible.

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

**Answer:** The variety found within parish ministry offers a wealth of opportunities which naturally brings its own challenges. I am particularly looking forward to the opportunity to get to know more people within the parishes I work in, hear their stories and work with them to bring positive outcomes for the church and wider community. The breadth of possibility is in itself challenging but also inspiring.

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:** Facing a fear of heights (or rather the risk of falling from them) to complete the longest zip line tour in Africa including across the Oribi Gorge in South Africa (for which I mostly had my eyes closed!).

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:** I have a heart and a passion for growing an intergenerational church which sees children and young people having an integral role alongside adults of all ages. I love to see people being nurtured and released to use their God-given gifts no matter what age they may be and I'm looking forward to being able to help to facilitate this as I work in the parishes where I will be serving my curacy.

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

**Answer:** I love learning about other cultures and traditions and, inspired by Ann Morgan, I am attempting to read a book (translated into English) from every country in the world. Ann managed it in a year ... it's certainly taking me longer than that, but I love the insights it brings to culture, tradition, history and lived experiences and I've enjoyed gathering recommendations from family and friends to help me complete my challenge.

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

**Answer:** I love to share meals with friends and when I'm in need of some quieter time to relax I will always return to a life-long love of reading good books.