

Media questionnaire and brief biography: **Christopher (Chris) Hegg**

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

Answer: 56. Hoylake, Wirral

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

Answer: St. Leonard's, Downham (Benefice of Clitheroe)

Tell us a bit about your family:

Answer: I am married to Depa, who I met on a Church of England course eight years ago. We live in the lovely village of Slaidburn with my elderly mother who has advanced dementia, with my wife as her primary carer. Depa is a committed Christian, former pastoral worker and leads Bible study groups. The other much-loved member of our family is Tasmin, our cat!

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

Answer: I currently work for BAE Systems in an administrative capacity and will continue to do so after ordination.

Tell us something about your journey towards ordination?

Answer: I grew up in a Welsh Presbyterian Church but drifted away in my teens. In my mid-40s I became aware of a call from God, a constant niggle that just wouldn't go away and I started attending my local Parish Church in Hoylake. Training as a Reader (Licensed Lay Minister) was interrupted by my move to Lancashire and then by Covid lockdowns. This gave me time to reflect on what type of ministry God was calling me to and, over time, I came to realise it was ordained ministry in an assistant (SSM) capacity.

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 for a: Patience. God will make things clear but in His time, not mine.

Answer for b: Being with so many others, from diverse backgrounds and traditions, who are on the same journey as myself.

Since the pandemic many more parishes have also embraced online opportunities to engage with their local communities alongside their existing services. Please indicate ways in which you may have done this already or what plans you may have to explore ways to reach people in the 'digital space' in the future ...

Answer: I look forward to working with my Training Incumbent to see how we can expand the online presence of all the churches in the Benefice as a way of reaching people who may otherwise be unaware of the work and message of the church. In particular, I would love to see a website for St. Leonard's with recorded Book of Common Prayer services available to playback.

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

Answer: Time is my biggest challenge. A full-time job coupled with helping my wife look after my elderly mother places considerable pressure on me. I am looking forward to helping to bring the Gospel, through words and actions, to the people of Clitheroe by assisting at all four churches in the Benefice.

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: I have recently co-authored and published the first-ever history of a major military railway in the UK (*'The Secret Railway in the Woods'*).

Bishop Philip has 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 will you seek to support the Bishop in fulfilling these aims?

Answer: By working with my Training Incumbent to reach young people. That will include helping with school visits; reaching out to youth groups and developing new activities that are aimed at younger people. I believe that every church needs to be working alongside local organisations that work for justice and fairness and I hope to be able to play a part in forging such relationships within the Benefice.

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

Answer: I have had a very varied career and used to own a small West End Theatre (not one of my better business decisions!).

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

Answer: Gardening, fell-walking and reading.