

Media questionnaire and brief biography: Emily Barry

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

Answer: I'm 40 years old and originally come from Exeter in Devon.

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

Answer: I am currently serving at St Mary Magdalene's and the Church of the Ascension in Ribbleson Parish, Preston.

Tell us a bit about your family:

Answer: I met my husband Nic when we were both students at Lancaster University and we've been married for 17 years. We now have two boys aged 6 and 10.

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

Answer: Before entering into ordained ministry, I was an Occupational Therapist for 10 years. I worked in NHS mental health services in various community and inpatient across Lancashire.

Tell us something about your journey towards ordination?

Answer: My journey towards ordination started in 2010 when, in a short space of time, several people asked me whether I had considered a call to Priesthood. My initial response was to think that I would never be capable, so I told God it wouldn't work because I can't preach. A fortnight later I was sharing some of my testimony at church and afterwards was told I was a good speaker and was invited to join the preaching team! That got my attention and started me on my journey.

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: The most important thing I have learned is that God is calling me to be myself in ministry. He has made me and called me as I am.

Answer for b: The most inspiring thing I have experienced has been seeing people come to know Jesus in a personal way for the first time and the transformation that He can bring to their lives.

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: We have developed our social media presence and use this space to share the things encouraging us in our faith, whether that be verses from Scripture, worship music or inspirational quotes. We are exploring making our Sunday sermons available online so that those who cannot attend on Sunday can better connect with the church community and be encouraged in their faith.

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

Answer: Over the coming year I will be praying and exploring with our ministry team how we can expand our ministry to our large parish and share the love of Jesus with more people. I'm looking forward to seeing how God guides us, and in particular how we can empower and raise up local people to be ministry leaders in their own communities.

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: Being a parent – this is an ongoing and ever-changing role. Seeing my children growing up, explore the world for themselves and discover who they are is my most rewarding and life-giving achievement.

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: There are many people in our parish that struggle with poverty and whose ability to thrive is suppressed by injustice; I will continue to support Bishop Philip's aims as I serve at the Parish Pantry and at the altar – declaring God's transforming love in my words and actions, and fighting the injustices that hold so many people back.

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

Answer: I am half Polish and some of my ancestors were Polish gentry!

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

Answer: I love to sing! I have joined our community choir, which is great fun. I also like to play the piano and the flute.