

## Media questionnaire and brief biography: **Matt Gaze**

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

**Answer:** I'm 24, I grew up in a very rural-sounding 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, St Barnabas Darwen and St Mary's Grimehills.

Tell us a bit about your family:

**Answer:** I have a wonderful wife called Grace who's a curate at St Peter with Philip, Bolton-le-Moors.

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

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

Tell us something about your journey towards ordination?

**Answer:** When I was just 14 I received a calling on my life to go into ministry. The call was clear and a direct answer from prayer. After two years of trying my best to ignore this calling I finally began to pursue it.

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:** That it's not all on me. I can't do my job well in my own strength but only with the power of God.

**Answer for b:** 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.

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:** My hope is to reach further to people who don't know Christ using the digital space through media advertisement. When every person is on a screen and most on social media it makes little sense not to be reaching out to them in a non-contextualised manner. That's why I hope to use things like Facebook as a helpful tool to reach new people.

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

**Answer:** My wife's curacy is coming to an end this year and so we are discerning where to go next for her Incumbency. Such a large change comes with many challenges but our hope remains to allow us to flourish in her new role as I continue in mine.

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 got married last summer!

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:** My training incumbent and I are currently working with our amazing congregations towards a new vision for our parish. In particular, this vision has a focus towards helping children and young people get to know Christ as well as enabling more people to serve in our churches.

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 this hasn't come up much in ministry.

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

**Answer:** I love catching up with old friends, playing a few good board games and going on a few good hikes.