

Media questionnaire and brief biography: Nikki Mann

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

Answer:

I am 41 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 Lancaster St. Chad's.

Tell us a bit about your family:

Answer:

I have a husband, Leslie, and a 9-year-old son, Alex.

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 and I now finally feel that I've found the role God has been calling me into for all these years.

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 how utterly essential it is to abide in and with God and in doing so draw strength, inspiration, wisdom and guidance from Him. I've also learned how easily the busy nature of ordained ministry can detract us from working out of a place of rest and abiding. As I've leaned into the concept of abiding more than ever before I've found value in a wide range of methods and traditions of prayer and contemplation and have learned that there is always more to learn about how I can be spiritually fed.

Answer for b: The most inspiring thing I've experienced during my training has been the generosity of colleagues, both lay and ordained, in offering their wisdom, skills and experience to contribute to both my own training and formation and also the life of our church communities. It has been particularly inspiring to see a number of lay people, including children and young people, step into roles of service and leadership as their own faith matures and to see them grow in confidence as they flourish as people of God.

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 are continuing to grow our online presence as a church community and particularly to explore how we can use online platforms to help our immediate neighbours become more familiar with who we are and what we do. It has been joyful to see this grow out of a real desire amongst the church communities to connect with our neighbours and share our faith and community with them.

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

Answer:

The parishes that I serve in are continuing to grow, particularly as new housing developments spring up. It is a real time of change in our community and there are a wealth of opportunities for creatively reaching out to those who are not yet a part of the church community and those who are seeking to explore the Christian faith.

The breadth of possibility and the scope for witness, discipleship, mission and evangelism is in itself challenging but also inspiring. I'm looking forward to exploring new and creative ways of introducing people to Jesus, sharing the Gospel and helping people to grow in their faith as I continue to serve my curacy.

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:

Knowing that as a teacher I was able to make a difference to the lives of young people and help them find their path in life, both in terms of career but also in exploring the Christian faith, is one of my most significant personal achievements. It is always a joy to hear of them as adults and find out what they have done since leaving school.

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:

Joyful Christian communities where people of all ages and backgrounds feel loved, welcomed and able to flourish are more important than ever. This is something that we are fully committed to working for in the parishes where I serve. We are particularly keen to reach out to our immediate neighbours and explore ways of sharing the Gospel with them and making our church communities inviting and joyful places to explore faith. It has been a particular joy to see the ways in which our children and young people have been growing in confidence as they serve and participate in worship with the wider church community. Whether people are with us for a single service, a short time frame or for life we hope that in their time with us they will encounter the living God and know they are loved.

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

Answer:

Even though I don't currently have pets of my own I am a real animal lover and I enjoy spending time as a volunteer dog walker. My dream pets would be a herd of guinea-pigs. I have in the past raised pigs, chickens and taken care of a cow that belonged to Her late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

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

Answer:

I love to spend time off with my family, 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.