

Media questionnaire and brief biography: **Phil Vautier**

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

Answer: 33, Jersey

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

Answer: St Andrew's, Ashton-on-Ribble

Tell us a bit about your family:

Answer: I'm married to Innes (it will actually be our 10-year anniversary the day before my ordination) and we have four children – Clement (6), Margot (4), Jesse (2) and Perrin (6 months).

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

Answer: I was an engineer in London for several years after university, working to design and build large infrastructure projects. I particularly enjoyed doing this on renewable energy infrastructure as well as in the defence and transportation sectors.

Tell us something about your journey towards ordination?

Answer: I have been thinking about ordained ministry for the last 10 years and over that time I have been helped enormously by those who have entrusted ministry to me – from preaching occasionally to an elderly congregation in Essex, to serving teenagers on Christian summer camps in Somerset and more recently teaching the good news of Jesus to university students in London. These experiences have shown me the power of the gospel and the importance of having people set apart to serve and lead Gods' people.

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: I am always encouraged by Paul's teaching in 2 Corinthians 4 - that Christian ministry will frequently look weak and the church will often look fragile, yet this is not a reason to lose hope. God has made it like this '*to show that the all-surpassing power is from God and not from us*' (v7, NIV).

Answer for b: I have loved being part of a church small group over the last few years with a number of church family including an elderly and retired ordained minister. It has been amazing to see him continue to trust Jesus and speak so powerfully of God's faithfulness, whilst serving others in the group and supporting his wife and wider family. It has been personally inspiring to see an older Christian who has 'run the race' for the best part of a century.

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: When I was working amongst university students, I found having a digital presence valuable for reaching into groups that are more difficult to reach in conventional ways. Although I think that meeting and relating to people physically is superior in many ways, I recognise that exploring the digital space and its usefulness for ministry is more important than ever.

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

Answer: I know that it will be a challenge adjusting to the change over the coming year – a new city, a new home, a new church family and a new role. I am hoping and praying for a smooth transition for us and the children. However, with the change will come opportunities to serve a new city and a new church family. In particular, since the church is growing fast, there is a great opportunity to serve the new people that walk into the church each week. It will be a privilege to share the gospel with them, possibly for the first time and we are looking forward to seeing the Lord at work.

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: Growing up, my family deeply valued time together as a family and the development of close relationships. I think my most significant personal achievement has been the birth and nurturing of our four children. Our growth as parents is slow and stumbling, but we hope and pray that we might replicate that in our own family, and that our children would come to trust in the Lord Jesus.

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: I echo Bishop Philip's aims, as I am convinced that the Gospel and Christian kindness and generosity are not limited to a particular group. I will therefore work to reach all in the parish, irrespective of circumstance or age, with Christian kindness and the news of the life-giving power of Jesus.

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

Answer: I have been known to kitesurf in my spare time so you might see me on Blackpool beach at some point.

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

Answer: I like to cycle and am looking forward to exploring the beautiful countryside around Preston.