

Media questionnaire and brief biography: Tracy Hallows

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

Answer:

I was born in Swindon, Wiltshire. My father was in the RAF and for the first five years of my life my mother and I went wherever he was stationed. The longest service being in Germany, where my younger brother was born in 1966. When I reached school age we moved to Padiham, Lancashire where I spend the rest of my childhood and adolescent years. Leaving for university at the age of 18. I returned to Lancashire when I was 24 years old.

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

Answer: I began worshipping at St Luke's Brierfield and this was my 'sending Church'. During my three years as an ordinand I have served both here and the benefice church of St Cuthbert's Burnley. This is where I will serve my curacy.

Tell us a bit about your family:

Answer: Sadly my mum died in November 2011, my dad, Frank, lives locally and has been an immense source of support, guidance and challenge during my training. I have two sons, Ben (32) is a freelance video engineer. Tom (29) is a sport's coach,

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

Answer: I am a headteacher and will continue to be so during the initial period of curacy. This is my third post as a headteacher in a Christian school, currently Wheatley Lane Methodist Primary School.

Tell us something about your journey towards ordination?

Answer: My husband, John Hallows, died suddenly whilst he was a house for duty priest in St Mary's Gisburn. I obviously had to find somewhere else to live and God brought me to Brierfield. I began worshipping at St Luke's and the vicar, Rev Stephen Adesanya, was coming up to retirement. I asked him how I could help in the church more during the forthcoming vacancy and he said 'become a priest!' I was shocked by his reply, then lockdown happened and I spend the following 18 months discerning God's calling on my life. With prayer and support from many people, God led me to Emmanuel Theological College and I became an ordinand in the benefice.

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:

Being disciplined in prayer. I know if I neglect to spend time with God everything suffers.

Answer for b:

Meeting people whose life has reached absolute rock bottom yet their faith in God continues to shine through.

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:

As with many other churches we offered streamed services during Covid. Now, some meetings and other groups in the church do meet online if required. We have had screens installed in churches and are hoping to have internet access in the near future which will enable us to access and use technology in different ways.

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

Answer:

I will continue in my role as headteacher and so maintaining an appropriate balance between work, church and home is essential if I am to be the best I can be in all areas of my life.

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'm not quite there yet with still more essays to write! However, becoming a student again in my late 50s has both brought great joy and challenge. I love the learning and teaching; my fellow students and the teachers have been great; writing essays has been a huge challenge. When I did my degree, we had microfiche and a manual typewriter! I think I've almost mastered navigating a Moodle platform!

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 have spent most of my life working with children and their families and I want this to continue as I move to ordained ministry. I am passionate about finding new ways to engage our children, young people and their families. Sharing the joy of following Jesus has been a rich blessing to me as a Christian teacher and now headteacher and I know that the skills God has blessed me with will continue as I leave the formal education platform.

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

Answer:

As a child my Mum sent my brother and me to ballroom dancing lessons. (He was always so much better than me.) John and I took up this "hobby" together and I have continued since he died. I have a lovely group of friends and the teachers are very patient!

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

Answer:

I enjoy walking and exploring the amazing countryside of Lancashire and Yorkshire. I love to explore further afield too and last year managed to spend a week on beautiful Iona