

## **Media questionnaire and brief biography: Will Shepherd**

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

**Answer: 51, Abbots Bromley**

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

**Answer: St Thomas', Lancaster**

Tell us a bit about your family:

**Answer: I'm married to Clare who is a CofE priest. We love enjoying culture together: art, film, theatre, music, food and when we can, escape to the countryside for long walks. We have a dog called Dibley and cat called Winston. My Mum and Dad live in Staffordshire and are both actively retired. I have a brother in Sheffield who is married with two daughters and is a phenomenal long distance runner.**

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

**Answer: I was a Creative Director at McCann in London**

Tell us something about your journey towards ordination?

**Answer: I came back to faith in 2003 at the age of 30 after 15 years in the 'wilderness'. I was then an active Christian for 17 years, walked alongside my wife as she got ordained then, after quitting my job, lockdown and a conversation with Archdeacon of Guildford, Paul Davies, decided to pursue a calling to 'make Jesus better known' that had been growing for a while.**

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: To take things slowly, balancing passion with perusal**

**Answer for b: Fellowship with neurodiverse friends.**

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: I think digital is great for reaching the unchurched and isolated, however I feel it can only be a doorway to real, embodied relationship. So in that spirit I have conducted Zoom compline; YouTube nativity films (released in episodes over advent); created virtual choirs and bands and even originated "Carpool Caroloke". all with a view to connect inspirationally with the local community with the hope to make church more accessible. I've also developed editorial strategy for social media and upgraded church websites.**

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

**Answer: Staying fit at 50+. I'd like to get back to a sub 25 min 5k. Maintaining the healthy rhythms of prayer and Sabbath.**

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: Climbed Kilimanjaro, 2005. Did a sub 4-hour marathon in 2016.**

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 will inspire people with the love and life of Jesus.**

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

**Answer: I've presented at the UN in Geneva. At 16 I won a Buddy Holly lookalike competition run in The Sun and went to London and met Paul McCartney.**

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

**Answer: Run. Play guitar. Stroke the pets.**