



Please fill in an answer to each question. Keep your answers fairly brief, ideally 2/3 sentences maximum. Please write answers directly into this file where indicated.

Your name, your age and your home village, town or city (where you grew up):

Answer: Claire Cooke, 37, Liverpool

The church in Blackburn Diocese where you are serving:

Answer: St Thomas, Lancaster

Tell us about your family:

Answer: I am married to Jim and have two daughters, Natalie and Lydia, and a Border-poo Pup named Bella.

Former job before entering ministry?:

Answer: I worked as both a vocal instructor and church-based youth worker

Why did you decide to get ordained?:

Answer: After a clear call from God to study theology in order to put my roots deeper into His word, God subsequently lead me to Ordination. This was unexpected for me, but after I met others who were being ordained and learned more about the role of the priest in the Church of England I knew it was where God had been leading me all along. God gave me a clear sense of being called to be a missionary in the UK when I was very young and I see my role as pioneer minister as serving that call of God.

What's been the best thing about your training?:

Answer: Meeting people with varying experiences and perspectives on God, the church and the mission of God. My training was very rich because of the variety of expressions of worship and perspectives represented in the student body. To be able to call people with different views 'friends' means we can see things from another perspective from a generous and loving foundation. This has taught me much about the unity (not uniformity) of the church, being held together in love for one another and love for Christ.

What's the most important thing you have learned so far?:

Answer: I am a child of God first, before anything else. As a child of God, I am loved completely by God, known intimately by God and held closely and indefinitely by God.

Can you name the most influential person in your Christian life to date and, briefly, say why?

Answer: Rev Mark Pickett. He has modelled to me what it means as a priest to hold people in their difficulties, with genuine compassion, whilst also always living, working, preaching and leading out of a place of loving God and being loved by God first. Mark unashamedly relies on God and spends significant amounts of time just being with God, allowing God to shape him by the Father's love. Mark has taught me so much about the importance of 'being' before 'doing', which sustains me in ministry.

What is your hope for your future role?:

Answer: I would love to go to the margins of our society, where the poorest people in our society live, and see Jesus turn their lives into beautiful expressions of His grace, love and mercy. I would love to see different people express their worship to God in their own voice, from their local culture and with their own creativity. I would also love to see local leaders raised up to lead worshipping communities in places where the church has previously struggled.

Name one thing about you people would be surprised about?:

Answer: It is usually my age, although you have already made me confess that. I regularly get mistaken for being up to 10 years younger than I am, which often makes people quite confused when they meet my girls (ages 11 & 13).

What would you say was your most significant personal achievement to date?

Answer: Completing the BA in theology of mission and ministry with a 2:1 score, following a 15 year break from studies. I was diagnosed with Dyslexia in my final term of my final year, which explained the depth of struggle I had faced in the previous years of study for the degree. I was very proud to have pushed through and achieved what I did.

Favourite quote (from the Bible or elsewhere). Also state briefly why it is your favourite:

Answer: Currently, God keeps bringing me back to Psalm 46:10 – Be still and know that I am God.

What God is showing me is that the stillness is about making myself be quiet in order to see what He is doing... to see Him at work. I am still, but He is definitely not! He is living and active and doing so much that we miss because we can get busy working for him. I am learning that if I want to work 'WITH' God, then it begins with being still... watching and waiting.

Unfulfilled ambition?:

Answer: I would love to do some wild camping out where there is zero light pollution.

How do you personally hope to support the ongoing Diocesan Vision 2026 Healthy Churches Transforming Communities at parish level?

Answer: For me, the Diocesan Vision is about leading and inspiring the church to be what God called us to be right at the start – God's people who are blessed by Him in order to be a blessing to the whole world. Understanding and experiencing both elements are critical and deserve equal attention, and if lived out in a deep and authentic way leads to life being lived in all its fullness, in a way that transforms our communities.

How would you express your own vision for the church?:

Answer: As a pioneer minister, I would love to see many expressions of church grow up and flourish in our communities and see them champion and celebrate each other towards an ever increasing maturity in Christ, and not set in competition against one another.

How do you relax?:

Answer: I love a good nap. I would say 'reading a book', but reading a good book usually leads to a nap. ☺ When I am not napping, I love to be outdoors walking or camping and building fires.