

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: Stephen Large, 68, Burnley

The church in Blackburn Diocese where you are serving:

Answer: St Cuthbert's Burnley with St Luke's Brierfield

Tell us about your family:

Answer: My wife is Janet who is retired and sings with four choirs. Our eldest child is David who is a fishmonger with Sainsbury's. His partner is Mandy who is a hairdresser beautician. My daughter is Jennifer who is 32 and is a hairdresser. Her husband is Matt who is an engineer.

Former job before entering ministry?:

Answer: Construction worker.

Why did you decide to get ordained?:

Answer: I felt the calling from God and followed it.

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

Answer: Deepening my Faith through a deeper understanding of scriptures.

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

Answer: That Eternal life is not just about living forever. It is about living in God forever.

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

Answer: The most influential person in my Christian life is Jesus. His example and teachings have energised and motivated me to seek to serve God fully. Jesus's attitudes to life and to all humanity is a uniquely strong motivating force for me as a guide to my character, my attitude and my actions. Jesus through His example has brought to me the reality of a loving and infinitely compassionate God. Jesus is for me the love and justice that everyone seeks, and he is the only way, truth and life. Jesus is my Saviour and redeemer who breathed in his last breaths forgiveness for me. Jesus bids me to follow Him and I do so with a willing yet humble heart.

What is your hope for your future role?:

Answer: Assistant Priest at St Cuthbert's with St Luke's.

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

Answer: I was a hippy during the beginning of the 70s

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

Answer: My most significant achievement to date is having been made Deacon in the Church of England. Having left school at the age of 15 with no academic achievement I started my training with All Saints Centre for Mission and Ministry with an element of trepidation, but also with a determination to answer fully my calling. I have never feared a challenge. Jesus said many times, "follow me" and I was determined to follow Jesus's challenge no matter what the cost. When I completed my training and was presented at my valedictory service with my certificate and Hood I had a strong sense of walking with my saviour. I know that my walk with God is permanent and I know that there will be many challenges for me ahead however the experience that I have received over the past year has been invaluable and has helped me recognise I must at all times evaluate my character, attitude, motives, agenda and involvement to ensure that I am doing all things decently and following through with my responsibilities.

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

Answer: You did not choose me, I chose you and I have called you friends

Unfulfilled ambition?:

Answer: None

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

Answer: I intend to use my leadership to promote collaborative ministry and help others to identify and use their gifts in order to grow leaders in mission and evangelism. I will also help my two churches go for growth in collaboration by identifying ways in which we can become rooted in Vision 2026 through our combined practises of mission, outreach and prayer.

Our churches are big houses in neighbourhoods of houses and we need to get to know our neighbours and they need to get to know us. We cannot achieve this by merely conducting service behind four safe walls. There are other buildings within our parishes such as community centres and school rooms which could be utilised. We have a powerful message to take out with us and a Holy Spirit to guide us. These are a winning combination and we must use them.

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

Answer: To create a healthy church and to transform our communities by being obedient to Holy Scripture, in fellowship with the Holy Spirit. To proclaim the Gospel of Christ to all. To live out the promise of the Gospel in our lives and in our care for all. To promote social justice as the norm not the exception for all. To bring children and young into the centre of our worship and to support and nurture them as they make their journeys to faith.

How do you relax?:

Answer: Walking and gardening; socialising with friends and family.