

Parish Profile



April 22

St Stephen on the Cliffs
Blackpool



Contents

Welcome3

Message from Bishop Philip4

Blackpool and the Fylde coast5

The Parish6

Young people8

Buildings9

The Church9

The Vicarage11

The Parish Centre12

Worship14

Church groups and activities16

Walsingham Pilgrimage and Cell of the Society of Our Lady of Walsingham16

Sunday School17

Lent/Advent Study17

Tea & Chat17

Care Home Visiting17

Tea Dance18

Scouts18

Social Activities19

Administration and Finance20

Finance returns20

Friends of St Stephens21

The Future21

The Diocese of Blackburn23

Introduction23

Diocesan Vision24

We Look After You	25
Further information	26

Welcome

The parish of St Stephen on the Cliffs welcomes you to this our parish profile. We hope it will give you a snapshot of our parish life as you contemplate your next exciting position to further your spiritual growth and ministerial development.

The church is strongly and historically in the catholic tradition of the Church of England. The PCC has passed a resolution under the House of Bishops’ Declaration that only male priests should be appointed and celebrate the sacraments within the church under theological reasons. We are affiliated with The Society and are under the pastoral and sacramental care of the Bishop of Burnley.

Our core mission is to “promote and maintain the Holy Catholic Faith through our own example of worship, spiritual life and service.”

At St Stephens whilst clear in our Catholic tradition, we are proud to welcome into our congregation people of all backgrounds regardless of sexuality, gender, ethnicity or disability.

“A lovely church, a lovely location, with a warm and welcoming congregation.”

Message from Bishop Philip

Dear Father,

I really hope you enjoy this Parish Profile for St Stephen's on the Cliffs in Blackpool and please be assured of my prayers as you discern whether it is God's will that you should apply to be their next Parish Priest.

St Stephen's is a remarkable parish with a long history as a flagship of Anglo-Catholicism in Lancashire. The worship is robustly Catholic but also proudly Anglican, enhanced by a superb team of servers of all ages and a strong choral tradition. The buildings are elegant, flexible and beautifully maintained. The laypeople are deeply committed to the life of their church and the parish's long commitment to ministry to families is clear from the wide range of ages present on a Sunday.



The residential community that the parish serves is close to the centre of Blackpool with its multiple opportunities for mission and service. The deanery is one that has seen significant investment in recent years and we are praying for a priest for St Stephen's who will enhance the desire for growth and renewal which is embodied in the Diocesan Vision and lived out so vividly in Blackpool.

We seek a hardworking and prayerful priest who loves his people and delights in good quality liturgy. We seek a priest of the Society of St Wilfrid and Hilda who will happily inhabit the best traditions of generous and hospitable Catholic life. We are praying for a priest who combines good pastoral skills with a sincere desire to grow an already vibrant congregation.

Blackburn Diocese has a strong commitment to the parish as the core unit of mission and we seek priests who are passionate about refreshing parish life. We also work hard to be a diocese where mutual flourishing is embodied and it gives me great joy that traditional Catholic clergy share richly in every aspect of the life of the Diocese and form genuine friendships with colleagues of all traditions. Our vision to grow healthy churches and transform communities provides a uniting goal that draws together Anglicans of every tradition.

I do hope that this profile captures your imagination and helps you to hear God's call. If you would like to speak further please do get in touch.

Yours sincerely,

The Rt Revd Philip North

Blackpool and the Fylde coast

Blackpool is the jewel in the crown of the UK's many seaside towns, just as celebrated for its long stretch of beaches as its iconic Tower and world-famous Pleasure Beach.



Blackpool and the Fylde Coast is rich in art, culture and heritage, and is established as a theatrical gem, with West End musicals and vibrant festivals appearing on our annual calendar. No surprise then that since the inception of the parish, as witnessed by the presence of the Actors' Chapel, there has been a strong connection with Blackpool theatres, particularly

the Grand Theatre where the present incumbent is Theatre Chaplain. Along with the Catholic Stage Guild, St Stephen's hosts the annual 'Church and Stage' service. The Chaplain usually comperes the very popular Grand Christmas concert.

Blackpool lies in the heart of the Fylde Coast, an area recognised as one of 'The Best Places to Live' in a recent Sunday Times guide, with Fylde and Wyre being comprised of many quaint towns and villages. Its historic streets are full of many fashionable independent shops, restaurants and public houses.

But Blackpool is not all 'bright lights and fun' it has its problems and suffers from a high amount of seasonal unemployment, substance abuse, poor housing and high levels of deprivation.

The Parish

The parish originated in 1908 and is located in the north shore area of Blackpool covering an area of one square mile and approximately 2,500 households. It comprises of a mix of housing, including: hotel/guest house accommodation, nursing/rest homes, retirement properties and a number of HMOs.

There is very little industry within the parish with it mainly being taken up by holiday accommodation, local retail and the North Shore Golf Course. The largest employer in the parish is the Department for Work and Pensions Warbreck House site, however it is expected that this site will transfer to a new town centre location in 2024.

A full breakdown of the parish demographics is available on the parish's dashboard and spotlight

- [St Stephen on the Cliffs dashboard](#)
- [St Stephen on the Cliffs spotlight](#)

Endowed C of E Primary School being just over a mile away. Secondary schools and further education colleges are also conveniently located.

Young people

We have a small but enthusiastic group of young people within the congregation. They are actively involved in the serving team, help in Sunday School, in the sacristy and act as welcomers.

They are encouraged to take part in services by reading and leading prayers. They regularly attend the Walsingham Youth Pilgrimage as part of the diocesan group and join in with other diocesan youth group events



Buildings

The Church



The current church building was consecrated in 1927, the first church to be consecrated in the then new Diocese of Blackburn. Over the last 15 years major renovations have been carried out to the value of over £250,000 these include:

- Renovation of all windows
- Replacement of the organ
- Installation of new heating
- Installation of new energy efficient LED lighting system
- Improvements to sound system
- Installation of screen, projector and Wi-Fi

Although the fabric of the building is in good condition there is major work required to the roofs of the church along with the parish centre. Work has already begun in preparation for this and the cost for the work is in the region of £250,000.

An architect is in place to oversee the project, contractors appointed and the faculty application process has begun. Funds have been identified to start the work, a professional fundraiser with experience in identifying funds for these types of projects is in place and a fundraising campaign for the remainder is being prepared.

The church is a locally listed building and consists of a Nave, with Choir and High Altar, Lady Chapel, Actors' Chapel, Columbarium and Chapel of All Souls and Baptistry. There is a large Narthex which is used for post Mass sherry on Sundays. An application has recently been made by the local heritage group to English Heritage for national listing.

The church is open daily with the exception of Saturday for private prayer and visitors. Wherever possible this is from morning through to dusk.

The church is surrounded by large gardens with mature trees and lawns, to the south of the church there is a private walled memorial garden where ashes are laid to rest.



The Vicarage

The Vicarage is a good, purpose-built house, constructed in the early 1950s.

It sits on the same site as the Parish Church and Parish Centre, overlooking the church grounds, with views down to the sea. To the rear there is a small, easily managed, private walled garden. There is a double length garage with electrically operated door.

The house benefits from a modern, efficient heating system. The majority of the house is carpeted and the carpets will be left. The sitting room and dining room have solid wood parquet floors.

The PCC pays for garden care to the church grounds and the private garden (if desired). They also cover the cost of carpeting hall stairs and landing when required and the equivalent cost of decorating one room per year.



On the ground floor there is an inner entrance lobby, a W.C. with a wet-room shower, an understairs cupboard (with coat hanging space and the boiler), a large light and airy sitting room, with coal effect gas fire, a study with ample bookshelves, a dining room with French doors to the private garden, large modern kitchen with access to back yard and a utility room with access to the garage and the private garden.

Upstairs there are three large double bedroom and two singles, a bathroom with separate shower, and a separate W.C. The bathroom is due for refurbishment during the vacancy. There is a large, boarded loft with ladder access.

There is also a vicar's office/meeting room in the parish centre alongside the parish office.

The Parish Centre

The Parish Centre, also a locally listed building is located to the rear of the church (and connected) has two halls.

- The large hall (the original church) holding up to 120 people

-
- The small hall holding up to 75 people

Both halls are in good condition (although as mentioned work is needed to be carried out to the roof of the large hall) having recently been decorated throughout. They are heavily used by the local community, act as a polling station for local and national elections and have regular bookings throughout the week both during the day and evening.



Regular users include:

- Blackpool Karate
- Scouts
- Weekly Tea Dance
- Woodhouse Academy of Theatre Arts
- Langdale Free School
- Senior keep fit

There is Wi-Fi throughout the building and the small hall is equipped with new audio/visual equipment.

The large hall has a small kitchen and a fully equipped modern professional kitchen is located in the small hall. Both halls are licensed for the sale of alcoholic drinks.

The vicar's office and parish office are located in the connecting corridor from the church to the hall.

Worship

Our worship at St Stephens is rooted in the Mass. Our main weekly service is our Solemn Mass at 10.30am every Sunday. We use Common Worship Rite A traditional language, eastward facing and full traditional ceremonial. All solemnities are kept (on traditional days) with a Solemn Mass normally at 7.30pm and the full Easter Triduum is observed.

We have an active team of committed servers of a mixture of ages who assist at the principal services and some midweek Masses.

We have a small, but dedicated choir led expertly by our director of music who sing at our 10.30am Mass and Holy Days. They are frequently augmented by members of Cantantes Domino.

We have many members of the congregation who help with the readings (including young people) at the Sunday Masses and on solemnities and a number of congregation act as lay administrators of the sacrament.

Occasional offices		
Baptisms	9	
Weddings	2	
Funerals	in church	13
	at crematorium	3
Normal weekly attendance	adult	79

	under 16	4
Festivals		
Easter	communicants	79
	attendance	85
Christmas	communicants	78
	attendance	90



Our normal Sunday services are:

- 9am Low Mass
- 10.30am Solemn Mass
- 6pm Evening service
 - Evening Prayer (BCP) and Benediction – Easter to November
 - Compline and Benediction – November to Lent
 - Stations of the Cross – Lent

Currently our normal midweek services are:

- Wednesday 6.30pm Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. 7.30pm Mass
- Thursday 9.30am Mass
- Friday 12 noon Mass

We are lucky to have the ministration of two retired priests in the parish. Each celebrate one of the midweek Masses and both cover any absences by the vicar and help with occasional offices when needed.

Church groups and activities

Walsingham Pilgrimage and Cell of the Society of Our Lady of Walsingham

A Parish Pilgrimage goes every September to the Shrine of Our Lady Walsingham, the church also pays for a number of our young people to attend the annual Youth Pilgrimage with the diocesan group.

Theirs is a small active Cell of the Society of Our Lady of Walsingham who meet on a regular basis to pray the Rosary and celebrate the Mass of the Holy house. We would love to increase the membership of the group along with developing the social side of it as well as increasing the number of people who join us on pilgrimage.



Sunday School

Our Sunday School/Creche meets weekly in the attached church hall. The young people join us for the beginning of Mass and leave after the Gospel returning at Communion time. Led by a dedicated group of volunteers the young people learn about the day's Gospel through story, games and crafts.

Both the Sunday School and creche are open to regular attendees and visitors with children are always invited to join in.

Lent/Advent Study

Every year we hold Lent and Advent study groups, content in these varies each. With the onset of the Covid pandemic these were over Zoom during Lent and Advent there was both a Zoom session and an in-person session.

Past courses have included:

- #LiveLent
- Study of the Sunday Gospels during Lent
- Communion & Catholicity
- The Mass
- Ask the Vicar
- The Prophet Isaiah – A Light Shining in the Darkness

Tea & Chat

Our Tea & Chat group is held on the last Friday of every month. It's a chance for members of the local community to come together in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere to make new friends, catch up on local gossip or just to get out. It was a popular event until the Covid pandemic when it unfortunately had to be stopped. It has recently started again and numbers slowly growing once more.

Care Home Visiting

We have a small group of people who visit our local care homes on a monthly basis to sing hymns and have a chat. Obviously, this has been suspended during the pandemic, but it is hoped to restart this activity again in the future.

Tea Dance

Our weekly afternoon tea dance is a firm fixture on the local dancing calendar and regularly sees our hall packed to capacity. There is a regular group of dancers along with visitors who come along not just for the dancing, but to see and make friends, and excellent cake. They run an annual dancing holiday and fundraise for the church.



Scouts

There is a thriving scout group at St Stephen from Beavers through to Scouts. They are actively involved in the life of the parish helping out at many of the events. They meet every Monday in the Parish Centre and have regular acts of worship led by the vicar. They also join us at the Parish Mass a number of times throughout the year.

We also have relationships with other groups including:

- Blackpool Civic Trust
- Catholic Stage Guild North West
- Holy Cross Soup Kitchen

-
- Victoria Hospital Chaplaincy
 - Trinity Hospice
 - Chiks Children's Homes In Kerala State, India
 - Kensington Foundation

Social Activities

As with most things our social calendar has suffered severely over the Covid pandemic. Now things have started to ease a group of eager enthusiasts are now starting to plan the 2022/2023 calendar with the first event being a return of our very popular Shrove Tuesday Social.

The social events are important to the life of St Stephens and always attract not only members of the congregation but a good number of visitors.



Administration and Finance

The Electoral Roll currently stands at 89.

There is a small but dedicated PCC who meet 5/6 times a year. They are outward looking and happy for a challenge. Meetings of the PCC are focused more on the mission and outreach of the church whilst the day-to-day issues are managed by the Standing Committee.

The PCC employs a parish secretary who looks after the vicar's correspondence and production of the weekly bulletin and service books as required.

They also employ a parish finance officer who is responsible for the general day to day maintenance of accounts, paying bills etc. They also manage the parish centre and the bookings for this.

The Parish Share is paid in full every year. The COVID pandemic has hit finances hard over the last few years and it is increasingly difficult to meet this requirement, but the PCC are committed to ensuring it is continued to be paid in full each year.

The beginnings of a stewardship campaign were starting to be planned just before the outbreak of the pandemic which obviously put it on hold. With the discovery of the problems with the church's roof the PCC felt that a fundraising campaign could not be run at the same time as a stewardship campaign so this has been further delayed, but it's acknowledged that stewardship does need to become important in the very near future.

The parish pays vicar's expenses.

Finance returns

Year	2021
Parish income	£108,903
Tax efficient planned giving	£46,900

Amount per person per week	£14
Parish expenditure	£119,657
Parish Share assessed	Yes
Parish Share paid	£43,359 (Paid in full)

[Annual accounts for 2021](#)

Friends of St Stephens

Since 2007, The Friends of St Stephens, a separate charity has supported and financed to the tune of almost half a million pounds for the upkeep, repair and improvement of the church building to secure its continued existence as a spiritual and community centre for everyone who lives in north shore and the wider Blackpool community.

The friends raise money through subscriptions, managing legacies and donations and a variety of fundraising events. They also own two flats in Cleveleys which create a regular rental income.

The friends have helped to finance large projects like:

- Restoration of the magnificent stained-glass windows
- A brand-new catering standard kitchen for the parish centre
- A new electronic organ
- Basic but very necessary repairs and replacements such as roof repairs, new boilers, blocked drains and leaking pipes

The Future

As we emerge from the pandemic, we strongly feel that the parish and congregation are ready for a new challenge.

We want to grow in our own personal faith and devotion. Increase our attendance at services. We look to have more opportunities for prayer and worship, with the return of the daily Mass. We want to be able to share our faith with our community and increase our congregational numbers.

In our new priest we are seeking:

- A male priest of the catholic tradition who is a member of The Society/Society of the Holy Cross
- Someone who is friendly, open, approachable, with a sense of humour and welcoming
- Someone who loves to share their faith and encourage others to increase their own faith
- Someone who has the scriptures, prayer and the sacraments at the heart of their faith and is keen to help people discover them
- Someone with new ideas for outreach and evangelism in context of the catholic tradition, who will empower us to share this with others
- Someone who will work collaboratively and increase the lay leadership of the parish
- Someone who will challenge us in our faith and worship and help us to develop new forms of worship in the catholic tradition that will help us welcome new people into faith and our church family
- A priest who will help us involve our community more in our daily lives, who will help us develop a new vision for mission and outreach

The Diocese of Blackburn

Introduction



Ministry in the Diocese of Blackburn

In the Diocese of Blackburn we profoundly believe in the difference that the Gospel makes to peoples' lives and so have a deep commitment to building healthy churches which can transform the communities in which they are set. We are looking for clergy of all backgrounds and traditions who share our passion for making a difference in the name of Jesus Christ.



'Vision 2026' is a bold and ambitious strategy which presumes that growth is what God wills for his church and which seeks to deliver growth through making disciples, being witnesses and growing leaders. You can read much more about this on other pages.

Our Diocese serves an area of extraordinary variety, from the stunning countryside of the Trough of Bowland to the former mill towns of East Lancashire, from the University cities of Preston and Lancaster to the seaside towns of Blackpool and Morecambe, from elegant villages to Presence and Engagement Parishes, there is something for everyone. We have Parishes of all traditions and are strongly committed to the principle of mutual flourishing. We are also seeking to grow 50 new congregations by 2026 so need people who are gifted as pioneers and evangelists.

If you think that the Church of England is at its eventide and that decline is inevitable, then these pages are probably not for you. But if you believe that all things are possible if we trust God, love his people, pray fervently, preach the Gospel of salvation in Jesus Christ and work hard, then we would love to hear from you. Even if none of the jobs on

these pages seem quite right, get in touch anyway. And please be assured of our prayers as you seek to discern where God is calling you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+ Julian" with a horizontal line underneath.

The Bishop of Blackburn
The Rt Revd Julian T Henderson

Diocesan Vision

The year 2026 marks the centenary of the formation of the Diocese of Blackburn. Vision 2026 is our strategy to turn around the long-term trend of gradually declining church attendance. Our vision is to develop healthy churches which transform their communities, a vision in which making disciples for Jesus Christ and pursuing social justice sit side by side.

In 2015 we spent time in prayer with Vision 2026 as the focus. 2016 saw over 80% of parishes appoint lay Vision Champions whose role is to gently nudge /encourage parish leaders and congregations to plan and deliver activities that make disciples of Jesus Christ, be witnesses to Jesus Christ, grow leaders for Jesus Christ and prioritise work among children, young people and schools. We also hosted the Crossroads Mission, with visiting northern province bishops and their teams leading over 400 mission events over an autumn weekend. In 2017 we held a series of study days providing an opportunity for clergy to think about how they engage contextually with Vision 2026 and actively supported Thy Kingdom Come and promoted opening our churches as a place of welcome (and not just on a Sunday).

For 2018, we are encouraging parishes to transform their communities through words and deeds, and are holding a diocesan conference focussing on apologetics in late November. 2019 will be a year focussed on encouraging all of us to be effective disciples.

As a diocese, we are willing to face the cost of change; and in prayer we see the grace and power of God which can alone bring renewal and growth. We are committed to work together (clergy, laity, church schools, diocesan staff and the cathedral) to deliver Vision 2026.

Our Diocesan Vision Prayer is: Heavenly Father, we embrace Your call for us to make disciples, to be witnesses and to grow leaders. Give us the eyes to see Your vision, ears to hear the prompting of Your Spirit and courage to follow in the footsteps of Your Son, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

You can find out more by visiting the Vision 2026 pages on our website:
www.blackburn.anglican.org

We Look After You

If you come to Blackburn Diocese we will look after you...

- We have a great property department, who will do their best to ensure your house works for you and your family and is well maintained.
- We encourage all clergy to take their full annual leave entitlement, and also to use creatively the overtime we all put in to take an extra day off once each month, to enable you to have a midweek 'weekend' away.



We have a beautiful diocesan retreat house in the grounds of a ruined Cistercian abbey, where clergy are welcome to have personal reading days without charge (bring your own lunch).

Whalley Abbey Retreat and Conference Centre

- We encourage all parishes in vacancy to consider how they will 'pastor' and support their new priest. The diocese has an anti-bullying and anti-harassment policy.
- We have a unique pattern of peer-led Ministerial Development Review, designed by the clergy for the clergy.
- We are setting up a pilot reflective practice group for clergy new in post, in partnership with St Luke's Healthcare.

-
- If you are looking for a spiritual director or a mentor we have networks of people with whom we can put you in touch.



Bishop Philip leads a clergy walk

- We are always looking for ways for clergy to mix apart from work – including reading weeks, regular hospitality, and a clergy walking group. Further suggestions are welcome.

Further information

Parish website: <https://www.ststephenblackpool.co.uk>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/StStephenontheCliffs>

Diocesan website: <https://www.blackburn.anglican.org/>

VisitBlackpool website: <https://www.visitblackpool.com>