



Accrington St John with Huncoat St Augustine













Parish Profile

Contents

1.	Letter from the Bishop	3
	What Is the PCC's Vision for the Future?	
3.	What Is Our Spiritual Life?	5
4.	What Resources Do We Have?	10
5.	What Is the Community We Serve?	14
6.	Vicarage and Education Options	15
7.	Who Is God Calling?	17
8.	Vision 2026 and Beyond	18
9.	A note from Bishop Joe: Discerning God's Plan for the future in Accrington	19
10.	Clergy Care and Wellbeing	19

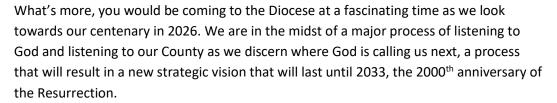




1.Letter from the Bishop

Thank you for showing an interest in a post in the Diocese of Blackburn.

Our Diocese is passionate about the renewal of Parish life. Vision 2026 sets before the churches of Lancashire a profound belief in the power of the Gospel to transform lives and communities and expresses a firm commitment to maintaining clergy numbers and investing in the mission of the local church. We therefore seek clergy with a personal faith fiery enough to make new disciples for Christ, with a sincere commitment to the Parish as the heart of the church's mission and with the resilience and courage to bring growth and renewal to local churches. We don't want superheroes. Rather we are seeking authentic, prayerful priests of all traditions who share our passion for confident proclamation and generous service.



We have also recently been successful in obtaining a grant of £25.5m from the Diocesan Investment Programme run by the national church. This will enable us to:

- Offer a transformed pattern of ongoing training and support to clergy, including sabbatical leave as an expectation for all rather than a treat for the few
- Deploy 30 'Ignite' youth and children's workers to parishes around the Diocese
- Invest in urban areas through expanding the M:Power course for urban leaders, employing 18 Urban Pioneers and re-imagining Christian life in areas of particular challenge.
- Expand our Diocesan Renewal Programme which has led to an average of 6% growth in RWA in participating parishes.

We are a Diocese that is united in defying the declinist mindset that has taken hold of so much of Western European Christianity. Through a firm belief in the power of Jesus Christ to change lives combined with strong pastoral ministry and imaginative developments such as new local congregations, we are seeing growth in churches of all traditions. Strong relationships with our amazing family of 191 schools (95% of whom benefit from practising Christian Headteachers) provide another springboard for mission.



The Bishop of Blackburn The Rt Revd Philip North



The Bishop of Lancaster The Rt Revd Dr Jill Duff



The Bishop of Burnley
The Rt Revd Dr Joe Kennedy





As a Diocese we do all we can to love and treasure our clergy. Our programme of Annual Conversations means that every licensed priest has a 90 minute conversation with a Bishop or an Archdeacon every year about their vocation, wellbeing and spiritual life. We have appointed an Assistant Archdeacon to advise on clergy wellbeing and we work hard to create networks that enable clergy to belong and find mutual support.

Those in their first incumbency are offered especially focused support. This includes participation in a two year Start of Ministry course, advice and care from a mentor and the oversight of our two outstanding Start of Ministry officers.

Lancashire has been described as 'England in miniature' and we can offer a vast diversity of parishes. We serve the most deprived communities in the United Kingdom on the Fylde coast and in East Lancashire as well as remote countryside. We are not immune from the particular challenges to ministry provided by an increasingly secular culture and a divided Church. But what brings us together is a profound and shared love of Jesus Christ and a passionate desire that all should know him, and in knowing him find life.

We really hope you enjoy reading this profile and that it provides all the information you need. If this particular post does not feel quite right, please do get in touch about other parishes in the Diocese that are vacant.

Most importantly of all, please be assured of our prayers as you discern the will of God for the next stage in your ministry.

2. What Is the PCC's Vision for the Future?

The PCC at the parish of St John with St Augustine has a clear vision guided by prayer for the future of our parish. Our hope is that by **2030**, we will be:

"A church family in Accrington and Huncoat of all ages and all backgrounds, joyfully worshipping and serving God."

This vision is built around four key priorities:

- 1. **Participating in heartfelt worship** creating space for meaningful, Spirit-led worship that draws people closer to God.
- 2. **Inspiring families to see worship as a lifelong commitment** helping households grow together in faith and make church activities a central part of their lives.
- 3. **Engaging with young people and growing their faith** building strong relationships with the children and youth of the parish and supporting them as they explore and deepen their walk with Christ.
- 4. **Learning what it means to be ambitious in our love for, and trust of, God** encouraging boldness in faith, generosity in love, and confidence in God's plans for our churches.





We are actively living out this vision through a variety of all-age services and groups, including *Praise and Play*, *Messy Church*, *Junior Church*; and *Stay and Play* - our toddler group that brings families together through music, play, and fellowship.

We are also committed to growing our digital presence. One of our PCC members has recently completed a digital marketing course, and we are beginning to use this knowledge to improve our social media outreach, raise awareness of our churches, and invite more people into the life of the parish.

Looking ahead, we are eager to host more community events and become a more visible and active presence in the local area. We are praying for a visionary leader who will embrace and champion our shared vision, work collaboratively with the PCC and congregations, and help us take the next steps in our journey of growth and mission.

3. What Is Our Spiritual Life?

At the churches of St John with St Augustine, our spiritual life is rooted in worship, prayer and a desire to grow together in faith. We are a parish that values both tradition and creativity, and we are committed to making worship accessible and meaningful for all ages.

Worship

We offer a range of services that reflect our desire to be for everyone:

- **Sunday Worship**: Our main Sunday services are welcoming and family-friendly, with a mix of traditional and contemporary elements.
- **Junior Church at St John's**: Our Junior Church leads the main service once a month, bringing fresh energy and creativity to worship and helping children grow in confidence and faith.
- All-Age Worship at St Augustine's: Young people play an active role in our all-age services, contributing to readings, prayers, and music as well as leading the worship once a month.
- Seasonal and Special Services: Our worship follows the Common Worship Lectionary with special celebration services for Advent, Christmas and Easter, as well as the Accrington Pals' Memorial Service, two patronal festivals, and mission events where we celebrate together with local schools, families and local communities.









Worship Music and Atmosphere

We have recently introduced iSingWorship - a modern worship music software that has transformed the way we experience sung worship. This platform allows us to offer high-quality, visually engaging worship music that is both accessible and flexible, especially in settings where live musicians may not be available.

By using iSingWorship, we are able to:

- Create a vibrant and immersive worship atmosphere that appeals to all ages.
- Support interactive and inclusive services, where everyone can participate confidently.
- Offer a consistent and uplifting musical experience, even in smaller or more informal gatherings.
- Encourage engagement with worship, especially among families and younger members of the congregation.

This technology has helped us bridge the gap between traditional and contemporary worship styles and has become a valuable tool in making our services more dynamic and welcoming.

Groups for Children and Young People

We are passionate about nurturing faith from an early age. We run several groups that provide a welcoming and engaging environment for young families and children:





Praise and Play is a weekly service for primary-aged children beginning with crafts linked to the Lectionary
gospel reading from the previous Sunday and followed by refreshments. This gives the younger members of
our congregation an opportunity to explore the Bible readings from the service in a way that is more
accessible to them.



• **Messy Church** follows seasonal themes and happens six times a year in the school holidays for children of all ages and incorporates worship songs, stories, crafts and games ending with a simple shared lunch.









• Stay and Play for parents, carers and toddlers happens each week and provides a safe and secure meeting place for children (and indeed carers) to interact with each other in a Christian environment. The children learn to pray, as well as undertaking a variety of activities including art, crafts and games.





These groups are an important part of our outreach and help us build lasting relationships with families in the local community.

Prayer Life

Prayer is central to our life as a church. We hold Morning Prayer three times a week on Tuesdays and Thursdays at St Augustine's and Monday at St John's. We offer a quiet and reflective space to begin the day in God's presence. There is also a midweek Holy Communion service a little later in the morning on Wednesdays at St John's Church. In addition, we host a monthly parish prayer group, where members gather to pray for the church, the community, and one another. Prayer also shapes our meetings, services, and decision-making, and we are exploring ways to deepen our corporate and personal prayer life.

Discipleship and Faith Formation

We are keen to grow in our understanding of Scripture and what it means to follow Jesus in everyday life. While we do not currently have formal home groups, this is an area we are eager to develop with the support and guidance of our new vicar.

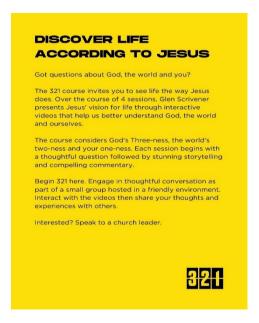
We are currently offering:

- Alpha and Alpha Junior to help people explore the Christian faith in a relaxed and welcoming environment to help prepare them for Confirmation.
- Small groups for Bible study, prayer, and fellowship. These seasonal studies have followed courses run by Bishops Philip and Jill. These courses have each been offered in three venues at three different times of the





week, making them accessible for the majority of the congregations. Our Mothers' Union group (19 members) meets once a month in St. John's Church. We have a varied programme of events and speakers and enjoy a meal out at Christmas and during the summer. We are fully committed to supporting the MU and its projects and activities through our prayers and fundraising and occasionally hold open meetings at which non-members are welcome to join us.





• Opportunities for lay leadership and ministry training. We are blessed to have a Licensed Lay Minister (LLM) who plays an active role in leading worship, supporting pastoral care, and, as a Spiritual Director, helps to nurture the spiritual life of the parish; and two Authorised Lay Ministers (ALMs) who lead community groups in the week, lead prayers in Sunday worship, act as sacristans to prepare the churches for services, and offer extended Holy Communion.









Community and Fellowship

We at St. John's host a weekly coffee morning linked to St John with St. Augustine C. of E. Primary School, which provides a relaxed and friendly space for parents, carers, and members of the wider community to connect. It is a valuable opportunity for outreach and relationship-building, run by the two churchwardens, one of whom is also an ALM. We hope to grow this ministry further. At St. Augustine's, the services of Praise and Play – for primary aged children and Stay and Play – toddler group, both encourage community bonding and fellowship in a Christian environment as in both groups children are accompanied by parents and carers. The distribution of Holy Communion to those in Care Homes also helps bring the community together.

Theological Tradition

Our theological tradition is a blend of traditional, evangelical Anglican, and contemporary expressions. We value the richness of Anglican liturgy and heritage, while also embracing creative and modern approaches to worship and mission. This balance allows us to honour the past while remaining open to new ways of engaging with God and our community.

4. What Resources Do We Have?

We are blessed with a range of resources - both people and places - that supports the life and mission of our parish. These resources provide a strong foundation for ministry and offer exciting opportunities for growth and outreach.

Lay Leadership

We are supported by a committed and gifted team of lay leaders, including:

• One Licensed Lay Minister (LLM) who regularly leads services and supports pastoral care.





- Two Authorised Lay Ministers (ALMs) who contribute to worship, discipleship, and community engagement.
- A dedicated and active PCC, working collaboratively to shape the vision and direction of the parish.



• A team of faithful volunteers who serve in many areas of church life, from children's ministry to hospitality and maintenance.

Church Buildings

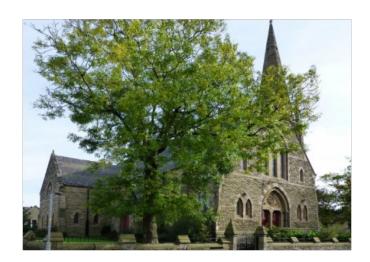
We are fortunate to have two beautiful and historically significant church buildings:

• **St John's Church** is a large Grade II listed Victorian building which incorporates a more newly built chapel dedicated to the Accrington Pals. It is a prominent and much-loved landmark, offering a spacious and welcoming environment for worship, community events and outreach.





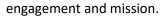








• St Augustine's Church is a smaller Grade II listed building, the only worship centre in the village of Huncoat and is close to the vicarage. It serves as a vital worshipping community centre and is well placed for local













Both churches have pleasant and well-equipped areas for enjoying tea, refreshments, and for hosting events, which help foster fellowship and welcome within the congregation and wider community.

Other Buildings

While we do not have a separate church hall, we are able to move chairs in the church body to make a bigger space for activities. This space is particularly useful for seasonal celebrations and community outreach and has been used for Carols under the Stars with a brass band when inclement weather prevailed, and a pet service at our Mission outreach weekend.

Church Schools and Educational Links

We have a developing relationship with St John C. of E. Primary School, and we are eager to strengthen this link in the coming years. We are currently involved in collective worship and host a weekly coffee morning in connection with the school, which provides a valuable opportunity for outreach and relationship-building with parents and carers.

In addition, the school holds a weekly assembly at St John's Church, helping children and staff feel at home in the church building and fostering a shared sense of faith and community.

St Augustine's Church runs a weekly *Praise and Play* group and has established links with Huncoat Primary School through this. We are keen to grow this connection further and over the years have welcomed classes from the school for a visit to the church during school time – an encouraging step toward deeper engagement.

There is also another large primary school within the parish with which we are eager to build a relationship as we recognise the potential for mutual enrichment and outreach.





We have links with St Christopher's C. of E. High School, where past vicars have served as chaplains. This connection provides a valuable bridge for young people and offers opportunities for pastoral support and spiritual development within the secondary school community.

Finances

We are part of the Parish Giving Scheme and have a number of regular givers who support the ministry of the church. We also offer various ways to contribute financially, such as having a card machine. We contribute to the Parish Share and are committed to good financial stewardship. While our resources are modest, we are careful and prayerful in how we use them, and we do hold some reserves which we aim to use wisely to support future growth and mission.

Community Links and Opportunities

We are actively involved in our local community and are always looking for new ways to serve and connect.

Opportunities include:

- Weekly coffee mornings linked to the school.
- Groups for toddlers and children {*Praise and Play, Messy Church,* and *Stay and Play*) where families from the wider area are welcomed.
- Seasonal events and services that draw in people from across the parish.
- A growing interest in digital outreach, supported by a PCC member trained in digital marketing.
- An annual Accrington Pals' service, which is very popular and well attended. This deeply meaningful event honours the memory of the 11th Service Battalion of the East Lancashire Regiment and draws together people from across the community, including civic leaders, veterans, and local schools.
- Both churches contribute to our local church foodbank, supporting those in need within our community.

We believe there is great potential to deepen these connections and develop new partnerships with local organisations, schools, and community groups.

5. What Is the Community We Serve?

Our parish is located in the borough of Hyndburn and includes parts of Accrington and the village of Huncoat. This is a diverse and historically rich area with a strong sense of identity and community pride. However, like many post-industrial towns in the Northwest, it also faces a number of social and economic challenges.

Main Issues We Face

• **Economic hardship**: Parts of the parish fall within areas of significant deprivation, with high levels of unemployment and financial insecurity affecting many households.





- Health and wellbeing: There are concerns around mental health, isolation (particularly among older residents), and access to support services.
- Generational disengagement: While we have links with schools and some family groups, there is a noticeable gap in engagement with teenagers and young adults.
- Digital divide: Although we are developing our digital outreach, not all members of the community are online or confident with technology, which can limit communication and inclusion.

Under-Represented Groups

- Young adults and teenagers: There is currently limited regular engagement with this age group in the life of our churches.
- Working-age adults: Many in this group are not actively involved in church life, possibly due to working patterns, family commitments, or a lack of connection with what they perceive to be church structures.

Local Character and Heritage

The parish includes Huncoat village which is a place of historical significance recorded in the Domesday Book. The village still retains its original stocks and includes a stretch of the King's Highway, offering a tangible link to its mediaeval past.

Looking to the future, Huncoat has been identified as the site for a new garden village development, which is expected to bring new housing, infrastructure, and families into the area. This presents a significant opportunity for the parish to grow and extend its welcome to new residents, while also responding to the evolving needs of a changing community.

Parish Map

We serve the Parish of Accrington St John the Evangelist with Huncoat St Augustine of Hippo. This includes central Accrington and the village of Huncoat. You can view the parish boundaries on the Diocese of Blackburn's website here:

<u>Farish Map – Accrington St John with Huncoat St Augustine</u>

This map shows the geographical area we cover and helps us understand where our mission and outreach can grow.

Vicarage and Education Options

The Vicarage

The vicarage is located in Huncoat, which is a quiet village on the edge of Accrington. It sits within a modern family estate, offering a peaceful and attractive setting for clergy and their families. The property is a detached fourbedroom house with a double garage. There are two en-suite shower rooms plus one family bathroom. Downstairs comprises a lounge, large kitchen, utility room, large conservatory currently being used as a dining room, toilet and two further small rooms that can be used for study purposes. There is a large garden to the rear of the property and a small, paved garden area at the front, adjacent to the drive.





The vicarage is:

- A 5–10-minute walk from St Augustine's Church.
- A 7- minute drive from St John's Church.
- Surrounded by beautiful countryside and nature walks ideal for relaxation and reflection.
- Close to a local park which is perfect for families and community engagement.
- Within a 1-minute walk of Huncoat railway station offering easy links to Preston, Manchester, Leeds, Blackpool and York.
- Conveniently located near the M65 motorway providing excellent road access to the wider region.

This combination of rural charm and strong transport links makes the vicarage an ideal base for ministry and family life.

Local Amenities

Huncoat offers a friendly village atmosphere with:

- A convenience store.
- A fish and chip shop.
- A pharmacy.
- A 24-hour petrol station and garage, providing fuel and basic supplies.
- Two pubs offering food and live entertainment, serving as popular social hubs for the community.
- Green spaces and walking routes.
- Quick access to Accrington and Burnley town centres for supermarkets, shops, and leisure facilities.

Primary Schools

- Huncoat Primary School
- St John with St Augustine C of E Primary School
- Accrington Peel Park Primary School

Secondary Schools

- St Christopher's Church of England High School
- Accrington Academy
- The Hollins High School

Colleges and Further Education





- Accrington and Rossendale College Offers A-levels, vocational courses, and adult learning;
- Burnley College A larger college with excellent academic and technical programmes;
- University of Central Lancashire (UCLan) Preston Campus, Blackburn Campus and Burnley Campus
 (Offering a range of undergraduate and postgraduate courses, these campuses are within easy reach and
 provide excellent opportunities for higher education and professional development.)
- St Christopher's School and Accrington Academy both have their own sixth-form provision.

7. Who Is God Calling?

We are prayerfully seeking someone who will lead with warmth, vision, and a heart for people. The person God is calling to our parish will be someone who:

- is outgoing, enthusiastic, and brings a good sense of humour to ministry.
- has a warm, engaging personality and is approachable not officious.
- is a natural communicator who can connect with people of all ages and backgrounds.
- is family-oriented and understands the joys and challenges of family life.
- is excited to become part of the community and not just to serve it.
- will work collaboratively with others to grow the churches in faith, number, and outreach; and
- is organised and forward-thinking able to manage the practical aspects of parish life with confidence and care.

Essential Qualities:

- A person of deep faith and prayer, rooted in the Gospel and open to the work of the Holy Spirit.
- A strong and compassionate leader who can inspire and guide others.
- Someone who is open to creative ways of generating support for our mission and ministry (including events and initiatives that bring people together).
- A person who is committed to community involvement and is visible in the life of the parish.
- A team player who values lay leadership and works well with volunteers and staff.

Preferable Attributes:

- A passion for inclusive worship and accessible teaching.
- Confidence in using digital tools and social media for outreach and communication.





- A desire to build on existing school and community links.
- Someone who enjoys hospitality and fellowship and will see our churches as places where relationships are nurtured and lives are transformed.

8. Vision 2026 and Beyond

Vision 2026 is an agenda for growth agreed by the Blackburn Diocesan Synod in 2015. It challenges our parishes to be healthy churches that transform their communities as we look ahead to our diocesan centenary in 2026. It also lays out four ways in which this over-arching goal can be achieved: Making Disciples, Being Witnesses, Growing Leaders and Prioritising Children and Young People.

All that we do as diocese is focussed on the delivery of Vision 2026. For example:

- To make disciples we have 'Fruitful', our Diocesan Discipleship app and distribute 10,000 devotionals at Lent and Advent which enable people to study the scriptures. We also encourage greater generosity in the giving of time, talents and treasures.
- To be witnesses, many parishes are setting up new local congregations at different times and in different places to reach out to new groups of people as well as showing God's love in action through projects that meet human need.
- New leaders are emerging as we seek to enable and equip those God is raising up for lay and ordained ministry. Our M:Power course is a nationally innovative resource for forming leaders from working class backgrounds.
- Our focus on children and young people is enabling creative thinking to raise up a new generation for Jesus Christ. This is supported by our family of church schools, teams to support children and youth work and our Youth Forum.

In the Diocese of Blackburn we are inspired by confidence in the Gospel and are ambitious in our desire to make new disciples for Jesus Christ. We are committed to mutual flourishing, to maintaining clergy numbers and to investing in training for new curates.

As we look to 2026 and the completion of the current Vision, the Diocese has embarked on a major programme of listening to God and our communities as we discern when he is leading us next. This is being supported in prayer as we observe a Year of Prayer for Growth and Renewal in 2025.

Our Diocesan Vision Prayer is:

"Heavenly Father, we embrace Your call for us to make disciples, to be witnesses, to grow leaders and to inspire children and young people.

Give us 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

9.A note from Bishop Joe: Discerning God's Plan for the future in Accrington

To catalyse the goals of Vision 2026, an extensive consultation process was carried out in recent years to hear from parishes what would help them to grow a healthy church that transforms its community and makes deeper and more followers of Jesus. The responses to this consultation process resulted in an application to the national Church of England Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment (SMMI) board.

In June 2024, significant investment was granted for a nine-year programme of renewal in the Diocese: £12 million in Phase 1; and £13.5 million (agreed in principle) for two more stages of work and subject to evaluation of progress.

I am delighted that the SMMI Board also accepted our request that we be permitted to submit a further significant application for additional investment into Accrington and Burnley.

We are currently in the early stages of a discernment process for the Accrington Deanery – and this discernment process makes this an exciting and important time to be joining the Deanery. As the new incumbent of Accrington St John with Huncoat St Augustine, we invite you to work collaboratively with fellow clergy and lay leaders across the Deanery:

- to discern a positive, ambitious and robust vision for the Church of England in Accrington Deanery;
- to develop a clear plan to deliver that vision, undergirded by faith and prayer;
- to implement the plan and to work, under God, for a new future across the Deanery.

We are praying for the appointment of a new vicar for Accrington St John with Huncoat St Augustine who will bring enthusiasm for this discernment process and for the new vision which will emerge.

+Joseph Burnley

10. Clergy Care and Wellbeing

- Clergy are invited to participate in an 8 year annual programme to keep ministry fresh and vital. This includes periods of sabbatical and regular retreats.
- We offer an Annual Conversation in which every licensed priest spends 90 mins with a Bishop or Archdeacon discussing ministry and wellbeing.
- Ongoing theological training and teaching is offered through our partnership with Emmanuel Theological College. Clergy receive free access to a theological library of 22,000 books and regular seminars.
- Annual Diocesan Clergy Study Days and an occasional clergy conference seek to provide opportunities both to keep ministry fresh and to build relationships with colleagues.





- We offer first incumbents a mentor and participation in our Start of Ministry Programme.
- All clergy are entitled to an uninterrupted rest period of 24 hours in each period of seven days and one additional rest period of 24 hours in each month, and in the remaining weeks of the month to take a rest day and a light day.
- We offer a Clergy Assistance Programme. More information about this can be found on our website
- 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 have a beautiful diocesan retreat house in the grounds of a ruined Cistercian abbey, where clergy are welcome to have personal reading days for a modest charge (you can book in for lunch or bring your own).
- 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.



Whalley Abbey Centre for Christian Discipleship and Prayer

- If you are looking for a spiritual director or a mentor we have an excellent Warden of Spiritual Direction and networks of people with whom we can put you in touch.
- We are always looking for ways for clergy to mix apart from work including reading weeks, regular hospitality, a cricket team and a clergy walking group. Further suggestions are welcome.
- We offer free counselling to clergy and their families through the <u>Inter Diocesan Counselling Service</u> and our own Diocesan counsellor.
- Clergy Wellbeing is overseen by the Assistant Archdeacon for Clergy Wellbeing, Canon Neil Kelley.
 In addition our Dean of Women's Ministry, the Revd Lucie Lunn, offers support and care to female clergy in the Diocese.