

Canon for Presence and Engagement and
Priest in Charge of St Silas Blackburn
RECRUITMENT PACK



A Message from Bishop of Blackburn

The Rt Rev'd Philip North

Thank you for your interest in the new post of Canon for Presence and Engagement and Priest in Charge of St Silas Blackburn. This role, generously funded by the National Church through SMMI, offers an unique opportunity to address the unique challenges and embrace the immense potential in North Blackburn and other areas of the Diocese where Christians form a small but vital minority.

North Blackburn is a place of vibrant diversity, where we are called to reimagine what it means to be God's people in a community where the Muslim population is the majority. This is not about retreating or scaling back but rather about boldly rethinking Christian presence. The work we do here has the potential to shape and inspire ministry in other Presence and Engagement areas, not only across the Diocese, but across the United Kingdom.

We need a priest who is open to the Spirit's leading, ready to listen, consult, and work collaboratively to energise and renew the Church's witness in this context. This is a chance to breathe new life into congregations that may feel weary and to affirm their value and role in God's mission. We need someone confident in their faith, ready to engage in genuine and honest dialogue with our Muslim neighbours, and passionate about building bridges of understanding and shared community.

The challenges in North Blackburn are real, but so too are the opportunities for growth, transformation, and renewed purpose. To withdraw from our Presence and Engagement areas would mean stepping back from our calling to be the Church for this land, present in every community. Instead, we are looking for someone with the boldness, creativity, and faith to lead us forward, living out the Gospel with courage and hope.

Can you help us to imagine anew what it means to be the Church in North Blackburn and beyond?

Yours in Christ,

+Philip Blackburn

Canon for Presence and Engagement

and

Priest in Charge of St Silas Blackburn

Introduction

The parishes of North Blackburn offer an unique opportunity for a Canon for Presence and Engagement to work across the diocese and in collaboration with the local churches. We seek to appoint a priest who will help us to rethink the shape and purpose of Christian life, in order that the Gospel may be lived out in fresh and ambitious ways in a setting which includes one of the largest concentrations of Muslim communities in the country.

The Context

North Blackburn offers a unique, exciting, challenging, and diverse context for Christian ministry and leadership.

- **Global significance** – The Muslim communities of North Blackburn are of national, even global, importance as one of the headquarters of the Deobandi revival movement. There are over 30 mosques in the area as well as Madrasas and Imam training schools that have an international reputation.
- **Extraordinary diversity** – North Blackburn is a highly diverse place: some parts of area are characterised by very high levels of social deprivation and high population density which meant that they were amongst the worst hit in the Covid pandemic; in other areas the Muslim community is an exceptionally wealthy one, for example North Blackburn is home to the Issa brothers who are funding a sizeable new mosque on Preston New Road. A fascinating introduction to the area can be found in Ed Husain's book, 'Among the Mosques.'
- **Challenge and innovation** – Many of the ways in which churches traditionally build links to their communities (occasional offices, community projects etc) are radically different in this context – and at times the challenges which churches in this setting face can feel existential. At the same time, we believe that the context also offers the right candidate exciting opportunities to offer leadership in seeking and implementing innovative ways of living out the Gospel and relating to others which address these challenges.

The Churches of Project Area

The area covered by the project comprises three large, urban benefices serving between them six congregations and seven church primary schools in North Blackburn.

1. **North East Blackburn** - This parish has three churches and two church schools. St Jude's meets in a converted church building which is also a community space. St Michael's meets in an attractive and intimate parish centre. Holy Trinity meets in an extended vicarage adjacent to the old church. The incumbent is the Revd Nicholas Heale.
2. **St Stephen and St James** - This benefice comprises two large, Victorian church buildings. Each has its own church school. The benefice is currently vacant and is being supported by an SSM Curate.
3. **St Silas** - This parish has one church building. There are two church primary schools in the parish, St Silas and Wensley Fold. The Canon for Presence and Engagement will be Priest in Charge of this Parish. The parish currently has an interim incumbent, the Revd Paul Payton.

The congregations are faithful and committed and have shown imagination over the years in adapting to a changing context. They are also aware of a range of challenges, including ageing demographics, difficulties in identifying new lay leaders, and financial viability. Maintaining the church buildings in this context can be costly and complex; yet the buildings themselves offer an important – indeed critical – contribution to Christian witness to the area, and they are visible symbols of the presence of the Risen Christ in North Blackburn. We seek to appoint a priest who is committed to finding imaginative solutions to maintaining the witness of these buildings – and, even more importantly, to building up the important witness of their congregations.

'Business as usual' might see the slow erosion of Christian life across a large area of our diocese's See town. But we are committed to living out the Church of England's vision to be truly national church, with a Christian presence in every community. The Canon for Presence and Engagement will have a passion for this vision, and will work with these precious Christian communities, leading them in imagining a new future, with confidence and with ambition. Your aim will be to grow the life of the Church in North Blackburn, and to do so in innovative ways.

Blackburn Cathedral

The Cathedral is located at the southern end of the project area and will be a critical partner in reimagining the future of Christian life. The Canon for Presence and Engagement will need to work in close partnership with the Dean and Chapter to discern the role of the Cathedral in serving and supporting the churches of North East Blackburn.

The Purpose of the Canon for Presence and Engagement

The postholder will:

- Work collaboratively to discern a long-term plan to deliver creative and sustainable models of ministry in North Blackburn and contribute towards an application to the national SMMI for funding for such a plan
- Equip clergy and congregations for confident and pastorally appropriate approaches to mission including evangelism, church growth and community development
- Be Priest in Charge of St Silas and to develop strong partnerships with other churches which may result in pastoral re-organisation.
- Develop a close and growing partnership between the churches and Blackburn Cathedral.
- Be actively involved in inter-faith and local community work in the north Blackburn area, bringing creativity and capacity to develop relationships and initiatives.
- Encourage local churches to take positive action to work collaboratively with other faith communities for the common good.
- Develop training opportunities to develop confidence in understanding and sharing faith, cross-cultural engagement and opportunities for interfaith dialogue.
- Participate in a steering group with other local clergy and lay leaders to oversee and direct the work.

The Role

There will be three parts to the post:

1. Priest in Charge of St Silas Blackburn

The Canon for Presence and Engagement will have pastoral responsibility for this large church on Preston New Road, in the heart of the community and directly opposite the new mosque.

2. Presence and Engagement Consultant across the Project area

The Canon for Presence and Engagement will work collaboratively with the other churches in the region and with clergy who will be cross-licensed across the whole area. They will lead and advise in the re-imagining of Christian presence across the region. In such a role they will work towards a fresh vision that may include:

- Establishing fresh patterns of worship across the area in co-operation with other clergy
- Exploring contextually appropriate approaches to church growth and evangelism
- Rethinking the role and use of church buildings
- Celebrating the ministry opportunities provided by church schools
- Pastoral reorganisation and a more teamwork based approach to ministry
- Exploring innovative approaches to Christian presence: for example community development, schools and youth work, small communities etc
- Learning from churches that serve similar communities in the UK and globally

3. Honorary Canon of Blackburn Cathedral

An honorary canonry will not give the postholder any work responsibilities at the cathedral. However it will mean a stake in its governance and will provide a basis to establish a strong relationship with the Dean and the team at the Cathedral.

Person Specification

The successful candidate will:

- Be a person of prayer who believes in the power of prayer to change lives
- Be passionate about the mission of the church and the power of the Gospel to change lives
- Be able to give a confident and credible account of the Christian faith, even when challenged
- Have an ambitious and well-articulated vision for the role of the Church in multi-cultural contexts
- Bring experience in mission and church growth, especially in challenging areas
- Be an outstanding listener, able to consult and bring the best out of fragile congregations
- Be a natural team player, partnership builder and resilient leader
- Be relationally skilled and have the confidence to grow relationships across cultural and religious boundaries
- Have a passion for the urban church
- Be experienced in ministering in presence and engagement areas or be willing to learn
- have a good working knowledge of Islam and a thirst for continuing growth in this field
- Have been in priests' orders for at least six years

Practical Arrangements

The post will be held under Common Tenure, as specified in the Ecclesiastical Offices (Terms of Service) Measure 2009, with a stipend set in accordance with the Church of England's national scale for clergy.

A resettlement grant will be paid at the current rate.

Eligibility and pre-employment enquiries

The nominated candidate will need to have the right to live and work in the United Kingdom. They will need to complete an Enhanced DBS check and a pre-appointment occupational health clearance.

Safeguarding

You will be asked to complete a confidential declaration and your bishop will provide a Clergy Current Status Letter (CCSL), prior to interview, having examined your clergy file.

You will also be expected to be up to date with all relevant safeguarding training or committed to attending courses before taking up the post.

How to apply

Applications via the Church of England's Pathways website are invited from clergy of all backgrounds and church traditions.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to arrange a telephone conversation with **The Rt Revd Philip North, Bishop of Blackburn** as part of their discernment. To arrange an appointment please contact appointments@bishopofblackburn.org.uk

Closing date: **Monday 1st September 2025**

Interviews are planned for **Tuesday 23rd September 2025**

Parish Profile

St Silas

Preston New Road, Blackburn BB2 6PS



www.stsilaschurch.org

1. Parish Vision *From Vision to Fruition*

Further to an invitation by +Philip in late 2024 to evaluate the impact, at parish level, of the Diocesan Vision 2026 framework, our PCC took this opportunity (under the oversight of our recently installed Interim Vicar) as a springboard to recalibrate a parish **Vision for Mission – *From Vision to Fruition*** - in anticipation of the appointment of a new incumbent to serve both as parish priest for St Silas (0.5) and as Hon P&E Canon (0.5) across a swathe of parishes in North Blackburn.

Our PCC is highly motivated to maintain and further develop St Silas as a flourishing beacon of the ***Church Militant***, building on our strengths and proven track record for community service, by reviewing and renewing all areas of our mission and ministry including wise stewardship/custodianship of our physical and financial resources.

The core elements of ***From Vision to Fruition*** are captured in this graphic...



- Each element is an offshoot/branch of the central, sustaining vine: worship of our Triune God.
- Each element is a key facet in the fullness of the Body-of-Christ we aspire to be, as a servant-hearted, Spirit-led community.

2. Parish Church, Context, Community

St Silas church (celebrating its 125th Anniversary of Consecration this year) is an iconic building set in a prominent position along a main road linking Blackburn town centre

with the northern suburbs and beyond. Its fabric is in sound order (see website for further details of the history/architecture etc).

Set in a parish context with significant challenges to both numerical and financial growth and sustainability, decisions have been made in the recent past to reduce the overall cost of building maintenance and to release a reliable income stream. This was achieved by leasing out the Parish Centre and relocating all social, cultural and educational activities in the church building...

...October 2019 saw the culmination of a major milestone in the vision of St Silas for its future ministry and mission to meet the needs of its community. With the re-imagining and re-purposing of our Parish Centre as the Safe@Silas Housing Project (in partnership with the Blackburn with Darwen Homeless Charity, Nightsafe) we were able to bring about positive change in our community.

At the same time the PCC also developed an ambitious vision for the reordering of the Narthex area of the church to allow for multi-purpose use. As a first step towards realising this vision funding was successfully secured to install underfloor heating and for the reordering of the dual vestry areas into one unit - the Mercer Room - with facilities to provide a self-contained meeting/workshop/hospitality space, heated independently of the main building.

Although the plan/vision for the fuller development of the Narthex is currently on hold, we see the potential for this to be revisited in the future.

Although small, the congregation members at St Silas are faithful in worship, keen disciples, thirsty for numerical and spiritual growth, open to change, hospitable and welcoming.

The Parish of St Silas is one of contrasts. Cheek by jowl sits a mixture of affluence and deprivation with substantial, mainly 19th century detached and semi-detached properties fronting the main road on which the church is located which shield a majority of mainly terraced housing in the streets leading off. An extensive “executive” residential estate – Beardwood - dates from the 1980s and incorporates, on the very edge of the parish boundary, Larmenier Retirement Village (the site of a former convent) whose RC chapel serves as a monthly worship space for Holy Communion for non-RC residents.

A large number of terraced houses in the parish are rented out, with SERCO housing a significant proportion of temporary asylum seekers. Unlike the majority of **Blackburn with Darwen BC** Wards, the parish of St Silas has a very limited infrastructure of local shops and amenities, no Community Centre, and limited healthcare facilities.

The table below shows a summary breakdown by ethnicity and religion for the St Silas hub of the local Ward in comparison with the overall picture of Blackburn with Darwen BC. Further 2021 Census information can be found online.

| Census 2021 | | BwD UA | St Silas Parish* |
|--------------------|------------------|---------------|-------------------------|
| Ethnicity: | Asian | 35.7% | 67% |
| | White | 60.4% | 27% |
| Religion: | Christian | 38% | 20% |
| | Muslim | 35% | 66% |

*Calculated by combining data from the 2021 census area-hubs

The population of the parish is **c12.000** and is served by a wide variety of schools, some of which have strong and developing connections with St Silas. These include...

- St Silas CofE Primary (part of Blackburn Diocese CIDARI Academy) – one member of the congregation is on the Governing Body
- Wensley Fold CofE Primary Academy. Two members of the PCC sit as foundation governors one of whom chairs the governing body.
- Sacred Heart RC Primary (connected with the RC Church of the same name on the opposite side of Preston New Road to St Silas)
- Tauheedul Islamic Girls School (Secondary)
- Olive School – Islamic Co-Ed, all-age (Star Academy Trust)
- Queen Elizabeth Grammer School (Co-Ed Free School) – all age
- Westholme Independent School – Co-Ed, all age
- A number of small, but growing, Islamic day schools (eg Leamington Road Mosque) for primary aged children

In 2012 St Silas Primary School was re-built and subsequently won the 2013 RIBA National Award for Architecture



Within the parish are a number of residential care homes, retirement villages (eg **Larmenier**), and the **Nancy Derbyshire Trust Alms Houses** located immediately behind the church.

Nightsafe, the locally based charity for young people, operates **Safe@Silas** which accommodates young people under 21 yrs in the former Parish Centre, and which received a highly publicised makeover by **BBC Children in Need DIY SOS** in 2019.

Given the demography of the parish there is a significant range of mosques, madrassahs and Islamic Education Centres. There are growing relationships between St Silas and a number of these partly through involvement in school/church/mosque collaborations (eg recent Iftar meals during Ramadan) and developing dialogue initiatives in partnership with **Blackburn Interfaith Forum** and the Blackburn based **Lancashire Council of Mosques**.

Pre-Covid the then vicar made some valuable inroads into developing constructive relationships within the local Muslim community at both dialogue and social-interface levels. Post- Covid, and in light of a shift in the geopolitical landscape, it has proved more challenging to re-establish these links. Our current Interim Vicar is working hard to re-connect with local Muslim partners as a springboard for further development in anticipation of emerging P&E priorities.

Apart from Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Church there are no other Christian places of worship within the parish boundary. However, St Silas has recently become part of the **CTNB** (Christians Together in North Blackburn) network which incorporates URC, Methodist, RC and CofE churches and individuals. St Silas hosted a **CTNB Pentecost Songs of Praise** in June 2025 as a re-launch of a vision for CTNB's greater collaboration and solidarity as mission partners across the area.

3. **Community Hub Worker**

In 2024 a successful round of bids secured 3-year funding for a Community Hub Worker to generate arts-based church/community activities around the Hub of Narthex and

Mercer Room. The ambitious vision for ***CreativeArts@Silas/Sanctuary@Silas*** is being rolled out in Nursing Homes, Schools, community spaces etc as well as within the church building.

Recent projects developed by the **CHW** have included a RNID/PHAB Creative Arts/Music group that meets in the Narthex; a fledgling Dementia Café; family art sessions in Corporation Park café; making Bug Hotels/Bird Boxes with a variety of school and vulnerable young adult groups; and arts taster sessions in local nursing homes.

Further to the growing success of the Community Hub Worker's activities, and the substantial grants that have been sourced to promote this work, the PCC is now considering where, as a church, our **Music Ministry** – within the context of worship and also as a community asset– might be developed beyond the retirement of our longstanding Organist and Choirmaster at the end of September 2025.

Various options/models are under discussion but will not be actioned until the new vicar is in place and consideration can be given to aligning PCC/P&E vision and priorities in this area. In the meantime, cover will be found to maintain the current pattern of music provision for worship.

4. **Resources**

Despite the limitations and capacity of a small congregation we have been strengthening and developing, alongside the work of the PCC, Teams/Groups to help facilitate the outworking of our ***From Vision to Fruition*** ambitions and to build opportunities for “every member ministry”. These include...

- Safeguarding Team
- Events and Hospitality Team
- Communications Team
- ECO Team
- Lay Ministry & Discipleship Team
- Buildings and Fabric Team (including Volunteer Cleaning Team)
- Worship, Sanctuary Guild, Verger, Sacristan & Music Team
- Ministry with Young People Team
- Finance & Stewardship Team
- Enabling and Volunteer Team (in support of the Community Hub Worker)
- Pastoral/Nursing Homes Outreach Team
- Educational Visits Team
- Flower Guild
- Ladies' Circle

- Bell Ringers

As an example of how these developing Teams are contributing further to the life and witness of St Silas, captured below are some features of recent activity/developments by the **ECO Team...**

- Recent renewal of a St Silas Eco Policy
- registration and working-towards the ECO Church Bronze Award
- preparing and involvement in leading an annual cycle of Agricultural Year/Environment Themed services
- developing & hosting at St Silas a programme of community events in partnership with Blackburn with Darwen Environmental Team, Local Ward Councillors, schools, community groups etc that encourage positive action around environmental awareness e.g. October 2025, ***Beacons not Bystanders: Community Day of Environmental Awareness and Action***

In order to explore key developments in the life and witness of St Silas we hold regular, well-attended Saturday morning Café Forums for the PCC and congregation to come together. In 2025 these have included ***From Vision to Fruition; ECO Church; Sanctuary/Inclusive Church@Silas.***

We continue to maintain excellent relationships with the schools and nursing homes in our parish and sustain this with the pro-active support of the Community Hub Worker and Foundation Governors. Our Interim Vicar along with a small team of volunteers regularly visit 3 of our local Nursing Homes for a short, informal service of Holy Communion.

Our two church primary schools regularly visit for key festivals and end-of-term worship plus a growing programme of class/year-group curriculum-based events. Our Interim Vicar is a regular visitor to the schools to offer Collective Worship, curricular and pastoral support.

Other local schools, including a number of Islamic Schools, also visit the church for curriculum-based activities. In June, St Silas welcomed over 350 children, staff and parents from 8 primary schools in the local cluster (SIG) for their annual Music Festival as part of St Silas' ***With One Voice Festival*** weekend.

5. **Music Ministry**

Our present organist (who is to retire at the end of September and be known as Organist Emeritus) has played a significant role over many years in developing the music for worship and our annual programme of concerts and events. He has been an untiring advocate for the organ which, built by the Harrison Brothers of Durham, is a fine instrument that is much sought after as a recital, concert, rehearsal, practice, recording

& teaching resource. It forms a central feature of our annual Concerts and Events Series which draws audiences from a wide area, and which increasingly reflects the diversity of the community which we serve (see website for full 2025 programme)

Choir - a small, robed adult choir of faithful singers who enhance our worship with occasional anthems etc at the main Sunday service.

6. Finances

The Finance and Stewardship Team consists of an Acting PCC Treasurer, Gift Aid Officer, and assistants who help count, collate, record and bank.

There are three Planned Giving schemes: Parish Giving, Weekly Envelopes, and Monthly Standing Orders

Thanks to generous giving and careful stewardship - including healthy contributions to the open plate - the PCC has managed to pay the whole of the negotiated Parish Share; the benefits of which include our eligibility to access diocesan support for projects such as the Community Hub Worker.

| | Forecast 2025 | Actual figures 2024 |
|------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|
| Regular SO | £6400 | £7265 |
| Investment income | £192 | £197 |
| PGS | £9620 | £10614 |
| PGS Gift Aid | £2620 | £2654 |
| Envelopes | £3780 | £3781 |
| Open plate | £750 | £788 |
| Gift Aid SO open plate | £2700 | £2740 |

In 2024 the PCC agreed to join the SumUp cashless-giving pilot scheme and as such benefitted from a complimentary mode of giving with the benefit of no start-up fees. Whilst the take up has been slow it is particularly appropriate for Occasional Offices, concerts and special events/services.

Following the five-year lease renewal and rent review, income from Safe@Silas has increased. The annual rent rose from £12,000 to £14,625 gross. (The increase was based on the CPIH index). The Diocese subsidised this in 2024 to the tune of £2000 and the PCC

also agreed to extend its contribution of £2000 for another year. This means that Nightsafe will pay £10625 for 1st Oct 24 to 31 Sep 25. Monthly income therefore increased from £666.66 to £885.42 wef 1st October 2024. There will be an annual rent review based on the CPIH index every September from 2025 going forward.

Rental income from Vodaphone/Cellnex for the mobile phone mast located in the tower is a significant contributor at c. £5500 per annum excluding ad-hoc contributions for electricity consumption.

In recent times we have been blessed by some generous legacies from former congregants. As a PCC we have been exploring the viability of using some of this money to outsource the writing of bids for grant funding for necessary building works and outreach projects etc to enhance the return on these generous legacies.

After a good run of several years without major unplanned costs, in 2024 we incurred two: the boiler and the alarm system needed repair work amounting to £3100. This added cost combined with the reduction in planned giving meant the finances suffered a double whammy, which makes it all the more impressive that all the financial obligations including the agreed Parish Share for 2024 were met in full.

A copy of the audited accounts presented at the APCM 2025 is attached to the advert.

7. Vicarage & Schools

The Vicarage

St Silas vicarage is a four-bedroomed detached house. Built in the 1960s it stands in its own grounds, immediately adjacent to the church. The property is in a good state of repair.



St Silas Vicarage

The extensive, mature garden is well maintained by a contracted gardener.

As well as the wide variety of schools based within the parish (see above) further afield

Secondary Schools include:

- Clitheroe Royal Grammar School (Co-Ed Academy)
- St Christopher's CofE High School, Accrington (Co-Ed Academy)
- St Michael's CofE High School, Chorley (Co-Ed)

St Wilfrid's CofE Academy - Just outside the parish boundary - but with historic links to St Silas- providing Co-Ed secondary education through to VIth Form.

8. Spirituality & Discipleship

St Silas sits in a Central Anglican tradition but has been very open to a more Liberal Catholic style during the time of our Interim Vicar. Lent, Holy Week and Easter 2025 gave an opportunity to draw deeply into the spirituality of the season and to share in Bible study using the resources offered through Blackburn Diocese. Services, events, study courses were well attended.

The Diocesan Lent course opened a desire for further opportunities to meet regularly for prayer. In conjunction with the Archbishop of York's current prayer course materials and his planned visit to Blackburn Cathedral in October, a fledgling Prayer/House Group is in development.

There is a strong emphasis on discipling in the pattern of preaching and teaching and in the growing opportunities being created - some through the activities of the Community Hub Worker and the ECO Team - to volunteer in places and with people where witness, as Christians, can be effective in both word and deed.

Regular Pattern of Worship

Sunday

- 9.00am HC CW Order 2 (Traditional language)
average attendance 9 adults & 1 child (who acts as server)
Lay Lector, Eucharistic Minister
- 10.30am HC CW Order 1 (Contemporary Language)
Average attendance 30 adults & 3-5 children
Choir, Serving Team (including Lay/Subdeacon), Lay Lectors & Intercessors, Eucharistic Ministers
Occasional Junior Church
- 6.00pm Evening Prayer (mostly said) – average attendance 4 adults, various liturgies

Tuesday

- 10.00am HC (BCP)
Average attendance 12 adults followed by Tuesday Fellowship

Monthly

- services of HC in 3 Nursing/Care Homes and at Larmenier Village Chapel

Ministry Team

As well as our Interim Vicar we have a retired Priest (PTO) who assists regularly. Our Lay/Sub-deacon is an Occasional Preacher and is gently exploring a call to the role of LLM. Currently we have no ALMs or PAs either serving or in training.

We have...

- Sacristan and Verger
- a good range of Lay people who offer themselves as Lectors and Intercessors.
- a small team of people serving as Eucharistic Ministers.
- a mixed team of adult/child servers
- an organist (to retire at the end of September) and robed choir of about 12 adults.
- a small team of sides people.

Occasional Offices during 2025

1 Baptism (June), 1 Wedding (August) 2 Funerals in Church, 2 Funerals at Crematorium

9. P&E Job Description & The Vicar we are praying for

Following Bishop Philip's consultation exercise with the PCC earlier this year to explore a draft job description and its implications for St Silas, we have prayerfully (and at times excitedly) embraced the challenges and opportunities this post will, potentially, bring. Despite the limitations of our capacity, we are keen to offer support for our next Vicar. Realistically we appreciate that this, of itself, will need supplementing, especially as the split role may require careful calibration.

Alongside the person-requirements captured in the Role Description we are praying for a priest who, in all aspects of what it means to be the Body of Christ, will be...

- an encourager, enabler, networker, connector, bridge-builder, fence-mover
- creative, imaginative, wise, visionary **yet also** pragmatic, practical, realistic, grounded
- able to listen, watch, seek, reflect, laugh (with others, but mostly at themselves)
- people-savvy, emotionally on-the-page, organised, communicative, child-friendly
- keen to work with, alongside, in partnership, collaboratively, collegially
- lovingly and theologically inclusive

If you can offer a good selection/mix of the above attributes, alongside the requirements of the Role Description, we'd like to meet you.

With our prayers as you discern the way forward.

***Heavenly Father, we come before you with grateful hearts,
seeking your guidance in this time of transition.***

***As we seek a new vicar to lead and serve our church,
combined with a responsibility to develop presence and engagement across
the parishes and communities of North Blackburn,
help us to trust in your plan and to listen carefully for your direction.***

***Guide those who are part of this recruitment process,
especially our chosen Parish Representatives and Patronage Trustees
granting them clarity, patience, wisdom and unity in their decisions.***

***Bless the priest you are calling to serve this place, preparing their heart and mind
to respond with faith and joy.***

***May they be a faithful shepherd, guiding us with wisdom, inspiring us with their teaching,
and walking alongside us in love and humility.***

We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour. Amen.