

The Bishop of Blackburn

The Rt Revd Julian T Henderson

Dear potential applicant,

Ministry in the Diocese of Blackburn

Thank you for your enquiry about a vacant post in the Diocese of Blackburn, the Church of England in Lancashire. We believe God wants His Church to grow, and so are looking for gifted and prayerful clergy with a heart for the Gospel and mission, who have the energy and enthusiasm to implement Vision 2026, *Healthy Churches Transforming Communities*. You can read more about Vision 2026 overleaf.

Almost all of our parishes have Vision Champions who have volunteered to work with their clergy and lay leadership in keeping the Vision on the PCC and congregation's agenda. The Vision is about a radical change of culture, in which we engage in new ways in making the unchanging Gospel of Jesus known in our communities.



The spiritual, physical and emotional health and the ongoing development of our clergy is very important to us.

Please be assured of my prayers as you consider whether to make an application.

+ Julian

Bishop of Blackburn

Living in Lancashire

Lancashire people are known for their warmth and friendliness and those who are new to the area find it to be an easy place to make friends. There are excellent transport connections and the surrounding countryside is spectacularly beautiful. For those with children, the Diocese has over 180 church schools including 10 high schools; the vast majority are rated as Good or Outstanding.



Canon Fleur Green
Advisor for Women's
Ministry

Our call to Mission

As a Diocese we are fully committed to the breadth and diversity of the Anglican tradition. Traditionalist, evangelical, catholic, progressive, Eucharistic, charismatic – we don't care what the label is. As long as you are passionate about sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ and long to make new disciples, there is a place for you in the Church of England in Lancashire.



+ Philip North
Bishop of Burnley

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.
- 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.
- 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.

Bishop Philip leads a clergy walk



The year 2026 marks the centenary of the formation of the Diocese of Blackburn. In the ten years leading up to our centenary, Vision 2026 is a plan to turn around the long-term trend of gradually declining attendance. Our vision is for the growth of God's kingdom, not just of his church. 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.

Our vision has had a long gestation. When the Vacancy in See occurred in 2012 we began to look at how we were going to move forward as a diocese. On his arrival, Bishop Julian spent his first year visiting every member of the clergy in their homes and visiting all the parishes of the diocese. At the end of that first year, Bishop Julian shared his reflections and the vision began to become clearer. It was shared with the diocesan family in the deaneries and in a number of local events and unanimously adopted by the diocesan synod.

The first year was spent in prayer with the Vision 2026 as the focus. 2016 has seen the Vision develop, with parishes nominating Vision Champions who were commissioned in Preston Guild Hall along with Churchwardens in the presence of 1,600 people. As a diocese with our Vision, 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 by:

Making disciples of Jesus Christ

- Knowing the Scriptures better through reading, teaching, preaching and study
- Praying with greater depth and urgency for the Kingdom of God to come
- Giving generously of our time, talents and money to the cause of Christ

Being witnesses to Jesus Christ

- Sharing the Gospel of salvation with confidence
- Holding regular enquirers courses in as many local churches as possible
- Showing God's love in action through projects that meet a local human need
- Offering thorough and accessible Baptism preparation and follow-up
- Planting or renewing 50 new strategic congregations by 2026

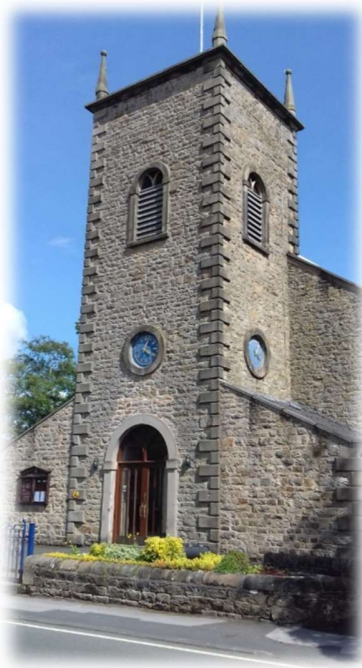
Growing leaders for Jesus Christ

- Supporting and equipping the current leadership for today's context
- Enabling missional leadership in every Christian community
- Liberating lay leadership for greater participation
- Creating the varied patterns of Sunday and weekday worship necessary to welcome all kinds of people, especially the newcomer
- Prioritising work among children, young people and schools to raise up a new generation for Christ

The Diocesan Vision Prayer:

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

St Thomas Church Garstang



St Thomas' Church Garstang

PARISH PROFILE 2017

OUR MISSION

We seek to proclaim the Kingdom of God and to make the Good News of Christ more fully known through worship, service and witness. Growing strong in faith and love we work together to serve and care for all.

About the Parish

This attractive, ancient market town, mentioned in the Domesday Book as Cherestanc, has a population of approximately 6,800 inhabitants. Situated on the banks of the River



Wyre, its rural surroundings make it a particularly delightful place to live. To this can be added the benefits of its close proximity to areas of great natural beauty - the Forest of Bowland to the east and the Lake District to the north. Lake Windermere, for example, is about an hour's drive from Garstang. During the summer months especially, Garstang is bright with flowers, having won the Britain in Bloom competition for a number of years now as well as most recently, the prestigious



European award, the Entente Florale – a testimony not only to its floral displays but also to the quality of its community life.

It is also recognised as the world's first Fair Trade town.

The town centre retains much of its old-world charm including some of its mediaeval features. Thursdays still see the main street bright with market stalls, attracting large numbers of visitors, especially in summer. The town is also well supplied to meet the needs of modern family life - banks, supermarkets, churches, a variety of shops of all kinds, schools, play-groups, leisure and medical facilities, most of which are within easy walking distance of the main residential areas. There is a vibrant and varied community life with groups, sports, clubs and associations that provide for a wide variety of needs, interests and enthusiasms for all age groups.



Not surprisingly, perhaps, Garstang is seen as an ideal place to live by people of all ages but especially by young adults seeking a safe and healthy environment in which to bring up their families. There are currently a large number of houses being built on the outskirts of Garstang bring more families into the parish. Easy access to the motorway and main roads makes it an attractive commuter base. Consequently, over the last fifty years or so, the town has expanded beyond its original ancient boundaries. Several phases of new buildings have increased not only the physical size of the town but also its population as more and more people have been drawn by its charms.

“The church’s role is to fulfil the church’s purpose, maintain the school and to help the community in general. To comfort those in need.”

Throughout this profile there are comments from the congregation on what we like about our church and our hopes and dreams for the church

What we like about our church

Our hopes and dreams for the church



ABOUT THE CHURCH/CHURCH HALL

The church and churchyard

Built 1769, balconies removed 1910, Narthex built 2003. Roof completely rebuilt after storm damage 1991. Organ totally rebuilt 1993. Car park opposite church.

Extensive grave yard still receiving burials.

The additional space that the Narthex has created provides a pleasant area where people can be welcomed, meet and talk before and after services. Here there a space where small children can play and be cared for whilst their parents take part in worship. This latter development certainly contributed to our recognition by the Diocese of Blackburn as a 'Child Friendly Church'



The Church Hall

St Thomas' Parish Hall and Community Centre is a wonderful new resource for the parish and wider community. It was opened, with fireworks and great celebration on 10th September, 2016 by Rt. Rev Dr John Thomson Bishop of Selby. This modern facility offers a large hall, meeting room, large kitchen, store rooms and toilets. Bookings to use this new resource are growing all the time. Current users of the hall include: Sunday Club, Friday Youth Club, Mothers' Union, Second Wednesday, Christening and Funeral receptions, Diocesan Conferences, Lancashire Adult Learning Art Classes, WRVS, weekly senior citizens lunch, Tie Kwon Do, Garstang School of Dance, Pilates, Zumba, Weight Watchers, Garstang Boat Club annual celebration and private parties.

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The Vicarage

Detached house, built 1840, next door to church and Parish and Community Centre.

Vicarage remodelled, 3rd storey removed 1972.

Spacious hall, lounge, dining room, study, breakfast kitchen, pantry, utility, wc, cellar.

5 bedrooms, 1 bathroom, 1 shower room.

Large garage, gardens, driveway completely refurbished 2017.

About the Church as People

We have a number of services throughout the week

Sunday

8:00 Holy Communion

10:30 Sung Eucharist

18:30 Evensong

Thursday

10:00 Holy Communion

Morning prayer is said in church each morning at 8:00

Services of Holy Communion are also held on Saints' Days throughout the year. The average weekly attendance is 171 worshippers.

"I like the fact that the services are held with decorum and up to a point the ancient liturgy prevails, and evensong is kept up"

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FAMILIES @ 9:15

On the second Sunday in each month there is an additional all-age service at 9:15. This is a more informal service with a band playing modern songs and activity-based worship.

ST THOMAS CHURCH CHOIR

St Thomas Church has an enthusiastic and dedicated group of singers that lead our worship at two services each Sunday. The choir currently has fourteen members, comprising of Sopranos, Altos, Tenors and Basses. The organist is responsible for choosing the music and directing the choir at rehearsal each Friday evening at 7pm.

In addition to leading the singing of hymns and songs at our Eucharist services we endeavour to sing an anthem once a month. We also lead the singing of Choral Evensong each Sunday evening.

We sing a wide mix of music to suit all tastes

from traditional hymns, psalms and anthems to contemporary hymns, songs and anthems of the present day.



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SUNDAY CLUB

We have a growing Sunday Club for three to 14 year-olds which meets in the Parish Hall during the 10:30 service. A group of enthusiastic teachers follow the Scripture Union Light magazines. There is an emphasis on enjoyment and fellowship with painting, dressing up, toys and play. We have a strong 11 to 14 year-old group which enjoy debates and bible study.



Other services

Christmas and Easter

Christmas and Easter are opportunities for mission. All services, especially those at Christmas, are very well attended. Our Christingle service, for example, on

Christmas Eve is popular with people of all ages but especially the children. It really is standing room only on this occasion!

Bereaved families are invited to a special evening service of remembrance and thanksgiving on All Souls' Day. These services, which include the lighting of candles of remembrance have been well attended and appreciated by all those taking part. We also have a Book of Remembrance that can be visited on anniversaries. Candles are made available for relatives to light. Every Sunday the faithful departed are remembered and by name if the anniversary falls on that day.

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Remembrance and Civic Sundays

Our vicar has traditionally been the chaplain to the local branch of the British Legion. The annual Service of Remembrance in November takes place in St Thomas' and it is attended by the civic dignitaries and uniformed organisations.

The annual Civic Service following the installation of the new Mayor of Garstang is held in our church fairly regularly although this is dependent on the religious denomination of the new mayor.



Confirmation

Confirmation usually takes place in May prior to which the candidates undertake a course of preparation currently led by the Curate. They are accepted for confirmation from the age of ten years. A small number of adults have also been confirmed each year. Ten years ago, the PCC agreed that children can receive communion before confirmation provided that they meet the established criteria and have been appropriately prepared.

The Confirmation Service each year has traditionally been held at St Thomas' and we have welcomed candidates from other churches to come to the Bishop for confirmation in our church. Maintaining our links with these young people after they have been confirmed remains a challenge for us, although we hope that the new Friday Youth Club may help with this.



"It is good that it is open every day to give people a place to get peace & tranquillity away from the stresses of everyday life. It also should spread the Gospel and to give people hope through kindness and caring"

What we like about our church

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About the Church and the Community



The church has a number of different groups

BOOK CLUB

About a dozen mums with teenage children get together for a monthly book club. This is a social and outreach evening with a mix of church goers and those with an association with church.

2ND WEDNESDAY

Activities include outside speakers, demonstrations and visits all aimed at providing interest, stimulation and friendship amongst its lady members. This is a lively group that is committed to charitable giving and also to contributing to the mission of the Church by encouraging members to bring non-churchgoing friends or neighbours.

"We have a church central to Garstang and the surrounding area, open and welcoming to all. Friendly and outward looking"

MEN'S FELLOWSHIP

"There are lots of things to join in with"

The Men's Fellowship aims to create a social fellowship between men of the parish and their invited guests including those from other churches. It meets every quarter in the Royal Oak where all enjoy a three-course meal followed by an after-dinner speaker. At each meeting a raffle and collection raise funds which are given to a charitable cause.

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MOTHERS UNION

Garstang St Thomas Mothers Union has 24 members and although not a large branch we are involved in various projects and activities.

This year we continue with emergency toiletries bags for the local hospital, and we are also raising money to help replace the Diocesan Caravan which is used to provide holidays for disadvantaged families.

Our members send birthday cards to infants who are baptised at St Thomas for three years when they are invited to attend Sunday Club.

We have a varied programme of speakers and also attend Deanery events, quiet days at Hyning Hall and get involved with Churches Together in Garstang events.

In future, we aim to recruit younger members ensuring that there needs are met within the MU, and to develop a programme of baptism preparation.

YOUTH CLUB

The opening of our new parish hall has allowed us to reach out into the community with a youth club. Friday Youth meets fortnightly for 10 to 14 year-olds to meet in a friendly and accepting environment. We alternate between having a traditional youth club with a pool table, table football and Wii games and special events such as a treasure hunt or disco. We normally get about 20 kids and this gives us a good opportunity to reach families who have no other link to the church apart from living in the parish. The currently plans to extend this to cater for older teenagers.



“Reach out to the sick and lonely in the community”

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ST THOMAS' CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Our school is one of three very good Garstang Primary Schools. There are currently 185 children on roll and another 25 (approximately) in the Nursery and Pre-school which meets in the former Rural Children's Centre. This was the first of its kind in Lancashire providing an invaluable service to the rural community and especially to those areas of deprivation that exist there. We are proud of what the school provides and achieves. Children are happy there and enjoy school life. A recent Ofsted inspection (June 2104) rated the school as Good with Outstanding features and the latest SIAMS inspector (May 2014) rated the school as Outstanding. recognised that standards are high, that children achieve well and especially commended the head teacher, Mrs Helen lfe and her staff.



The church community has strong links with the school. The children regularly attend church for various activities including worship. The clergy and some parishioners attend Wednesday worship in the school. The children have taken part in the Women's World Day of Prayer service and the headteacher recently gave the address on Education Sunday. This also involved some of the children.

A number of Year 6 children come forward each year for Confirmation, We continually look for opportunities to extend our link with our school.

A small number of the children each year move on to Ripley St Thomas CE High School in Lancaster. However, the majority remain in Garstang and move on to Garstang Community High School when they leave St Thomas'. During the last three incumbencies, the vicar has been a member of the Governing Body of the High School.

OPEN THE BOOK

Open the Book is an ecumenical programme of assemblies for Primary Schools produced by the Bible Society and based on Bible Stories. For the last two years, a team from the Church present a different story each week at St Thomas' CE Primary school and every three weeks at Nateby Primary School. The children, in costume, act out the story as it is being told and every opportunity is taken for full audience participation. Each story is followed by a period of reflection and prayer. The programme has proved very popular

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with the children and also with the headteachers and staff. It adds an additional dimension to weekly school worship.

Helen Ife, Headteacher at St Thomas C of E Primary school,

'Open the Book on Monday starts our week with a biblical message in which children are given the opportunity to act out and join in. These messages are related to modern day life and support our Christian values in school. We feel they are lessons for life. The performance promotes confidence with the children and the OTB team deliver on a child friendly level. Thank you for helping guide the children and staff on their spiritual journey'

The Context for Ministry

ECUMENICAL



“Reach out and try to encourage as many as we can to join use particularly the young people in our lovely town”

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The Characteristics and Qualities of your Priest

Our growing parish is large, diverse and demanding. Some of our needs and aspirations are already identified in appropriate sections of this Profile. Our new incumbent will need to be hard working, energetic, enthusiastic and resilient.

“A church which can take its full place in the Garstang and District group of churches and one which was known for its involvement with the community. A thriving church with a congregation with children in church and everyone working together”

What we would like our new vicar to be like

“Experience of worship with all ages”

“Someone to lead by example”

- Someone strong, outgoing, enthusiastic, spiritual and who will stand up for what they believe.
- Someone who is prepared to do a full day’s work, starting with morning prayers.
- Someone who is proactive, hardworking, caring, a good preacher, a communicator, mission and liaison with community, school and other churches.
- Someone who will develop the spiritual life of our Church and who will respect its varied traditions and its approaches to worship.

“Outgoing and enthusiastic”

“Lead us all forward spiritually”

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“A people person who is caring, enthusiastic and has strong spiritual and leadership qualities relevant to all ages”

- Someone who will listen, help, support all aspects of parish life and also contribute to the welcoming ethos of our Church.
- Someone who will reach out in warmth and love to provide pastoral care and support to all those in need but especially to the bereaved, sick and elderly.

- Someone who is keen to build on all aspects of our parish life and especially to strengthen and extend our role in the wider community of Garstang, including our fellowship with other churches.
- Someone who will work with and encourage young families to become and remain part of our worshipping community.

“Spirit-filled who lives to please God”

“Cheerful and caring”

- Someone with a genuine interest in children and young people, encouraging them to attend Sunday Club and especially to remain and grow to adulthood in the Church following Confirmation.
- Someone who will be actively involved in our Church School.
- Someone who will recognise and value the gifts, talents and skills of the laity and provide opportunities for their growth and expression.
- Someone who will provide good leadership, who will communicate their ideas and beliefs with conviction but who will be open to discussion and debate.

“First and foremost, it is to always be a welcoming church in order to extend the congregation and involve everyone where possible”

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teams