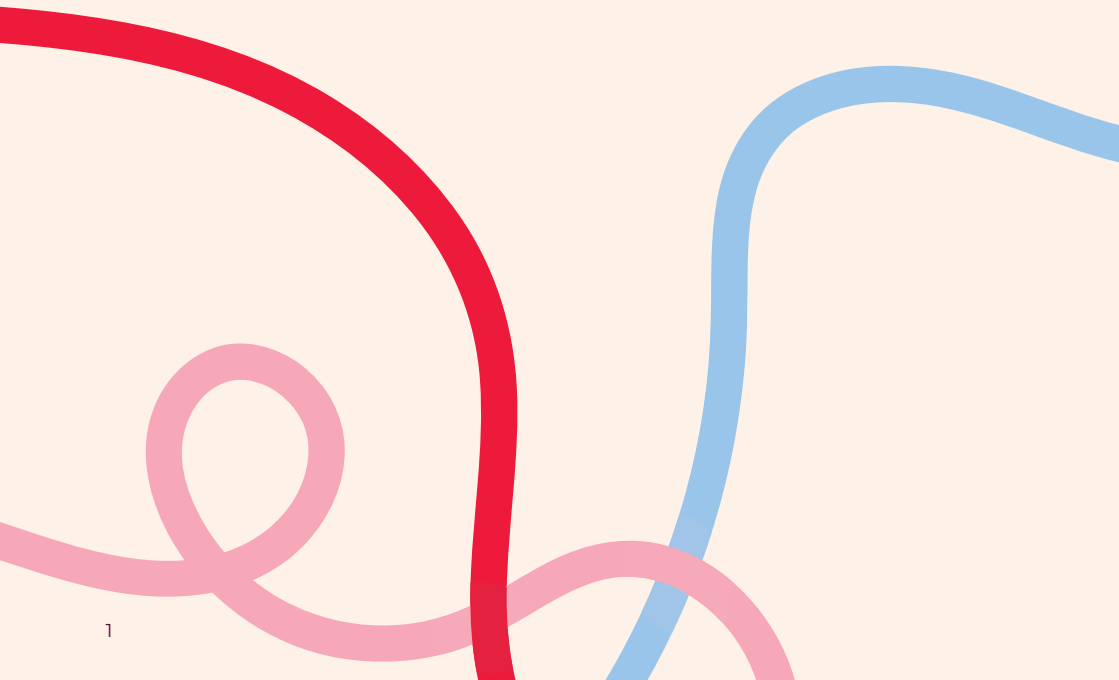
Diocese of Blackburn

Vision Summary

Joyful followers of Jesus

Seeing lives changed and communities filled with hope through:

- Knowing Jesus
- Loving our Neighbour
- Sharing our Faith
- Inspiring Young People
- Forming Christ-like Leaders





We are a people of joy. That joy is rooted not in the uncertainties of a fragile world or the ever-changing circumstances of our lives. We are joyful because Jesus Christ has won the victory and we are His for ever. Nothing can ever take this joy from us because it is rooted in what Jesus has done.

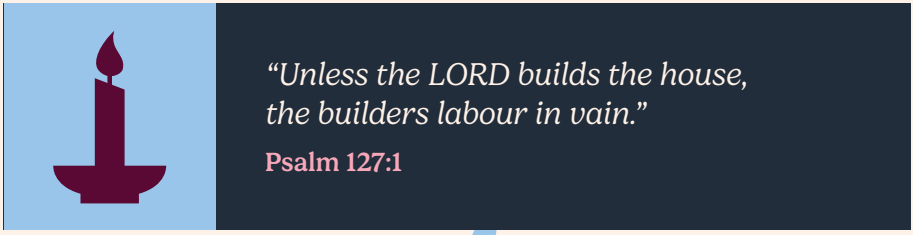
Joyful Followers of Jesus is an invitation to every person in Lancashire to discover the joy of Gospel living. Because when we know Him for ourselves and live our lives for Him, there is transformation. Lives are changed. Communities are filled with hope.

My prayer is that every church, chaplaincy and school will see in Joyful Followers of Jesus a dynamic invitation to know Jesus more deeply and serve Him more faithfully. Because the whole world needs to know the Good News of his saving love.

Rt Rev Philip North,
Bishop of Blackburn
November 2026

Prayer

Prayer sits at the heart of Joyful Followers of Jesus. We believe that lasting growth and transformation come as we seek God together, listening for His guidance, aligning ourselves with His will, and depending on His provision. Across the Diocese, we want to see prayer deepen in every church, school and community. New local 'Prayer Enablers' in every parish will help foster a culture of regular, expectant prayer, supporting clergy, leaders and congregations as they pray for growth and mission. Through daily diocesan prayers; shared gatherings for prayer; renewed encouragement to explore fasting and weekly worship we aim to strengthen the spiritual foundations that fuel everything God calls us to do.



"Unless the LORD builds the house, the builders labour in vain."

Psalm 127:1



Knowing Jesus

Being 'Joyful Followers' begins with **Knowing Jesus**. We are called not simply to know about Jesus, but to know Him personally, learning from Him and being transformed into His likeness. As we grow in prayer, engage with Scripture, worship together, practise generosity and embrace rhythms of rest, we deepen our relationship with Christ and become more attentive to His voice and leading. Across our churches and schools, we want everyone to have opportunities to encounter Jesus, grow in faith and discover the joy of following Him.



"I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit."

John 15:5

Putting this into practice:

- Establishing a regular rhythm of shared prayer
- Using Bible-reading resources from the diocesan Fruitful app
- Organising a retreat or quiet day at Whalley Abbey
- Strengthening Christ-centred sung worship
- Encouraging confidence in the sacraments
- Leaders modelling healthy rhythms of rest and renewal



Loving our Neighbour

Loving Our Neighbour calls us to reflect the sacrificial, generous love of Jesus in every area of life. Inspired by Christ's example, we seek to serve others, build strong communities and help people flourish. We will express this love through prayer, everyday acts of kindness, practical support for local needs and a commitment to justice, dignity and compassion for all. As part of this, we are committed to advancing racial justice across our churches, schools and chaplaincies, ensuring that people of every ethnicity and background are fully welcomed, heard and able to participate and lead.

We also recognise our responsibility to care for God's creation and stand alongside those most affected by poverty and inequality. Across our churches, schools and chaplaincies we will nurture a culture where people of all ages are equipped to love like Jesus and make a positive difference in their communities.



Compelled by the self-giving love of Christ, we will dare to live God's kingdom now in order that lives may be changed and communities filled with hope.

Putting this into practice:

- A church praying regularly for its neighbourhood and local schools
- A school or parish listening to and responding to community needs
- Community projects that build relationships and reduce isolation
- Churches standing alongside those facing poverty or injustice
- Partnerships that strengthen local communities
- Eco Church, Eco School and creation-care initiatives

Sharing our Faith

Sharing Our Faith flows naturally from being Joyful Followers of Jesus. As we encounter God's love, we are called to share that hope with others through our words, actions and welcome. Rooted in prayer and dependent on the Holy Spirit, we want to grow in confidence in telling our stories of faith and inviting others to explore the Christian journey. We will foster churches that are welcoming, expectant and outward-looking, while continuing to plant new congregations and strengthen existing parishes. Across Lancashire, we are committed to helping every church flourish in spiritual, numerical and missional growth, so that more people can come to know the joy and life found in Jesus Christ.

"Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have."

1 Peter 3:15b

Putting this into practice:

- Regularly praying for friends, families and neighbours to come to faith
- Congregation members confidently sharing their stories of faith in everyday life
- A church creating a warm welcome and clear pathways for newcomers
- Enquirers courses to help people explore Christianity
- A new congregation or church plant reaching a new community
- Using digital media creatively to share the hope of Jesus



Inspiring Young People

Inspiring Young People is central to our vision of Joyful Followers of Jesus. We want every child and young person to be known, loved and encouraged to discover the life and hope found in Christ. Working together across home, church and school, we will help young people grow in prayer, deepen their faith, engage with Scripture and play an active part in worshipping communities. We are committed to supporting them through key life transitions, listening to their voices, and creating opportunities for them to lead and serve. As we invest in the next generation, we also expect to be challenged, encouraged and inspired by their faith, gifts and vision.

26% of primary school aged children in Lancashire are taught in a diocesan school and 33,250 of them experience a Christian act of worship each day.



Putting this into practice:

- Children and young people taking an active role in prayer and worship
- Churches, schools and families working together to nurture faith
- Young people exploring Scripture and growing as disciples of Jesus
- Strong support for key transitions, especially from primary to secondary school
- Young people contributing their ideas, gifts and voice to church life
- A new generation of young leaders serving in worship, mission and community

Forming Christ-like Leaders

Through **Forming Christ-like Leaders**, we will help people discover and fulfil God's calling on their lives. We believe every baptised Christian has gifts to offer in God's mission, whether in church, schools, workplaces or the wider community. Through prayer, discernment, training and support, we will nurture leaders who reflect the character of Christ and serve others with humility and wisdom. We are committed to encouraging and equipping both lay and ordained leaders, investing in future generations and supporting the wellbeing of those who lead today. As we raise up confident, compassionate and Spirit-filled leaders, we pray that God will renew our churches, communities and society through their faithful witness and service.



"The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."

Matthew 9:36-38

Putting this into practice:

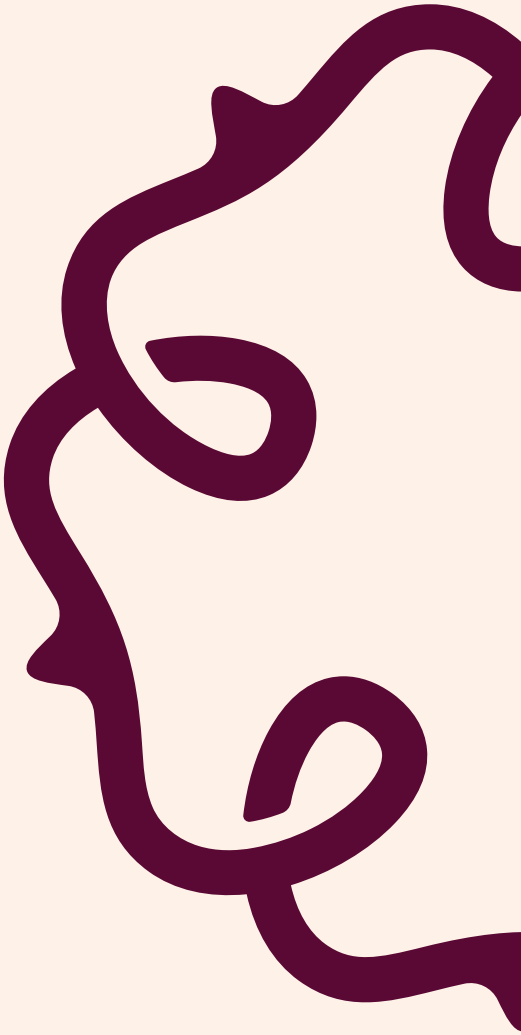
- Identifying and encouraging vocations in every parish and school
- Supporting Christian leadership in churches, workplaces and public life
- Equipping lay and ordained leaders through training, mentoring and formation
- Raising up leaders from a wide range of backgrounds and communities
- Creating networks where leaders learn from and support one another
- Prioritising the spiritual, emotional and physical wellbeing of those who lead



Parish Renewal

As a diocese, we are passionate about investing in and supporting parishes to grow and thrive. We will continue to maintain stipendiary clergy numbers and to value parishes as core units of mission and ministry.

We also value and delight in the rich variety of contexts across Lancashire – from urban to rural to coastal – and recognise that the delivery of the vision and the mission and ministry that results will be at its best when it is contextualised to meet the needs of local communities.



Safeguarding

Safeguarding is fundamental to our vision. We are committed to ensuring that all our churches, schools, offices and activities are safe, welcoming places where everyone is protected and valued.

We will focus on prevention, early identification of risk and clear, transparent process coupled with high quality training, support and partnership working.

How can I get involved?

This vision belongs to all of us. Whether you are a worshipper, volunteer, churchwarden, school governor, teacher, clergy person, PCC member, chaplain, youth leader or someone exploring faith for the first time, God has a part for you to play.

Together, let us pray the Diocesan Prayer overleaf and look expectantly to see lives changed and communities filled with hope across Lancashire.



Diocesan Prayer

Heavenly Father,
we rejoice to be followers of Jesus
by whose cross and resurrection we are set free.
Pour out your spirit
to change lives and fill communities with hope,
that all of Lancashire may find joy
in knowing your Son Jesus Christ.
Amen.



Diocese of Blackburn

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