

## A New Bishop of Lancaster!

Just a few weeks ago, it was announced that Jill Duff is to be made the new Bishop of Lancaster on 29th June at York Minster. This is the first female bishop we have had in Blackburn Diocese, and those who believe that leadership in the church should be open to both men and women at all levels are, understandably, pleased. Jill will join Bishop Philip of Burnley and, together, they will work under Julian, our main Bishop of Blackburn.

Many of you will know my personal opinion, that as I read the New Testament I see mixed teams of men and women working together in mission in ministry - even in a 1st Century largely patriarchal culture! But I also see in the New Testament that the leadership of those teams, and the regular teaching ministry to the mixed congregation is consistently given to men (1 Cor. 11, 1 Tim 2). The arguments that the New Testament advances, transcend any one culture at any one time - they are creation principles and so God intended them to operate for all of us, regardless of whatever age we live in. Granted they will be worked out and applied differently and variously in each age, but the principles remain - because they are about how God made us and intended us to live, and about the very nature of God himself - who does not change.



*Bishop Philip, Bishop-elect Jill Duff & Bishop Julian*

So, personally, I don't agree with female bishops. But there are lots of things over which Christians disagree - Communion, Baptism, Charismatic gifts, Evolution etc etc. Let's not divide over those things, let's always seek the truth and a better understanding of the Bible and God's mind, but at the end of the day we need to make the main things, the main thing. Paul, the apostle, talks about the things that are 'of first importance' (1 Corinthians 15) - which he says are about Jesus, his death and his resurrection. It is Jesus, God's own Son, who we are to follow and to point others to. It is his death on the cross which we are to preach as the only way we can be right with a holy God. It is his resurrection in which we are to trust, because his risen life guarantees ours!

These are the things that matter. And I am delighted that it's these things which drive our new Bishop Jill. Jill is actually a dear friend. She's someone who loves the Lord Jesus, loves the Bible and who longs for people to come to know Christ. In the last few years she's been leading a theological college in Liverpool, training people for ministry, and from time to time she's asked me to come over and teach. It has been a privilege to see her at work. I am convinced we are getting a great worker for Christ in Jill.

We'll have an opportunity to meet Jill and hear from her first hand on Sunday 22nd July at 6.30pm. We are cancelling our normal evening service and instead we're having 'An Evening with Bishops Jill and Phil' - where Bishop Philip (who doesn't agree with women bishops!) and Bishop Jill will interview each other, talk about how they can hold the views they do whilst working together, and they'll also share their passion for reaching people for Jesus and their vision for our Diocese. We'll have a chance to put our own questions too. Put the date in the diary now and plan to be there! You won't want to miss it!

So, whether you agree with women bishops or not, can I ask you please to be praying for Jill and her husband Jeremy and their two boys Robbie and Harry? Jill and I will continue to agree to disagree on some things I am sure, but on the MAIN thing she has my total support, love and prayers. With my love to you all in Christ, David (Vicar)

## Bishop Jill in Her Own Words...

On her appointment, Jill said: "I am thrilled and humbled to be appointed... Being born and brought up in Lancashire, the region has been on my heart in prayer for many years. I am passionate about planting new congregations and creating confident witnesses for Christ who can be beacons in their communities, sharing the Gospel message meaningfully in their own voices. The ambition currently in Lancashire is to have 50 new congregations by 2026 - which is impossible without God - and that's a good place to be." "Time and again I have seen how, with prayer and perseverance, churches can grow and it will be good to be part of a courageous Diocese that is looking to the future with real hope." Jill continued: "I've been attracted by the sheer variety of Blackburn Diocese - in the range of its parishes, settings, and church traditions. At the same time I realise there are certain aspects of my episcopal ministry that some won't feel able in all good conscience to recognise. I understand and respect the position of my brothers and sisters in Christ who do not accept the ministry of ordained women in leadership, whether sacramental or teaching. There is so much more that unites than divides us, and I am committed to working together for mutual flourishing. May this bring hope to our church at this time."

### **Task Teams (YACTT)**

In the last edition of Grow News we explained a little about our Buildings & Operations Task Team (BOTT) and our REACH (Mission) Task Team, this month it's the run of our Youth & Children's Task Team. (YACTT)

**Who is on the team?** Revd Matt Cook (Chair), Carl Fisher (AXIS), Karen Ogden (Sunday Club), John Robb (PCC), Janet Sutherland (Office Administrator), Katy Turner (Children's Worker) and Alex Wright .

**What is the team's remit?** Our Vision as a Church is to REACH GROW SEND. The Youth and Children's Task Team's role is to encourage the REACHING of young people for Jesus; that they may GROW and be SENT by him to their friends. It does this by: i) Overseeing the youth and children's work at St Andrew's - giving support and direction. ii) Planning the strategy - and curriculum, so that all the work is co-ordinated. iii) Facilitating the work - recruiting, training, resourcing and helping leaders to do the work. iv) Reaching families - connecting with whole families, not just young people

**How can you be involved?** Please pray for the following -

- For our Youth and Children's task team as they meet together - making decisions, planning strategically, providing training for leaders, supporting leaders etc.
- Pray for the leaders and helpers of all our children and youth groups.
- Pray for our children and young people - that they would come to know Jesus and put their trust in Him or that they would grow in their relationship with Him.
- Pray for discipleship - for our leaders and our children and young people and their families (how we can all work alongside and disciple and encourage them and how we reach them).
- Pray that our we would all use every opportunity to share the Gospel!

Please also consider if you could help at our annual Church Bible Holiday Club (starting on 6th August). Every year we have many children coming along to hear about Jesus and we always need people to help out. If you would like to volunteer or find out more then please speak to Katy Turner (our Children's Worker) or our church office.

### **A Note From The Local Street Pastors**

Street Pastors walk the streets of Preston and Chorley to listen to, care for and help people in whatever need we find them by putting Christian faith into action and showing the love of God in all circumstances encountered. To create a safer community by encouraging people to take up alternative lifestyles or channel their energies to positive ends for the good of themselves and the community. We value your prayers for us, we see them answered each week as you will see from these comments:

"A man came to say thanks for the help and first aid we gave him when he was beaten up a while ago - we got him a taxi and got him safely home and he was really grateful"

"Met a woman and she said she was no longer homeless at present as a friend had let her use a flat nearby. She was very complimentary of Street Pastors and said we always had time to talk to her and spent time listening to her. When she was leaving I gave her a warm hug and she said she had not had such a loving hug before and thanked me."

"Hello, I would just like to thank you for the assistance you gave me last night when I was not able to look after myself, I had a cut foot from broken glass and you kindly tended to my wounds and gave me some flip flops, my mother was very appreciative of the assistance you gave, it's brilliant the work you do on Preston's streets. Thanks again."

What we do:

- St Matthew's every Friday night from 8.00pm to midnight
- Preston City Centre every Saturday night from 10.30pm to 3.30am
- Preston City Centre once a month on a Friday night from 10.00pm to 3.00am
- 50 volunteers and 22 churches involved.

In 2017 the Street Pastors reported:

- An encounter with 3195 people
- A hot drink or snack for 1452 people
- Warm clothes, hats, gloves, scarves or sleeping bags for 179 people sleeping rough
- 1269 glass bottles put in the bin
- 176 pairs of flip flops given out
- 21 Bibles or Christian literature given to people enquiring

If you would like to find out more about Street Pastors please contact Dave Brown on [preston@streetpastors.org.uk](mailto:preston@streetpastors.org.uk) or call him on 07794 008767

