



**LANCASTER
PRIORY**

PARISH PROFILE

February 2021

**A welcoming, inclusive Christian Community
serving the people of Lancaster**

Contents

| | Page |
|---|-------------|
| 1. Introduction | 3 |
| 2. Diocesan Vision | 4 |
| 3. We look after you | 5 |
| 4. Executive Summary | 6 |
| 5. The Parish and Wider Community | 7 |
| 6. The Priory's Community, its Worship and Mission | 10 |
| 7. The Priory's Music | 15 |
| 8. The Priory's Buildings | 17 |
| 9. The Priory's Finances | 19 |
| 10. Our Schools | 20 |
| 11. Our Links into the Wider Community | 20 |
| 12. Our Vision | 21 |
| 13. What We Offer | 22 |
| 14. Who is God Calling? | 22 |
| 15. Our Priory Vision Prayer | 23 |

1. Introduction

Dear potential applicant,

Ministry in the Diocese of Blackburn



In the Diocese of Blackburn we profoundly believe in the difference that the Gospel makes to peoples' lives and so have a deep commitment to building healthy churches which can transform the communities in which they are set. We are looking for clergy of all backgrounds and traditions who share our passion for making a difference in the name of Jesus Christ.

'Vision 2026' is a bold and ambitious strategy which presumes that growth is what God wills for his church and which seeks to deliver growth through making disciples, being witnesses, growing leaders and focusing on young people, children and schools. You can read much more about this on other pages.

Our Diocese serves an area of extraordinary variety, from the stunning countryside of the Trough of Bowland to the former mill towns of East Lancashire, from the University cities of Preston and Lancaster to the seaside towns of Blackpool and Morecambe, from elegant villages to Presence and Engagement Parishes, there is something for everyone. We have Parishes of all traditions and are strongly committed to the principle of mutual flourishing. We are also seeking to grow 50 new congregations by 2026 so need people who are gifted as pioneers and evangelists.

If you think that the Church of England is at its eventide and that decline is inevitable, then these pages are probably not for you. But if you believe that all things are possible if we trust God, love his people, pray fervently, preach the Gospel of salvation in Jesus Christ and work hard, then we would love to hear from you. Even if none of the jobs on these pages seem quite right, get in touch anyway. And please be assured of our prayers as you seek to discern where God is calling you.

+ Julian

The Bishop of Blackburn

The Rt Revd Julian T Henderson

2. Diocesan Vision

Vision 2026 is an agenda for growth and change 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. To make disciples we are raising levels of prayer, helping regular patterns of bible reading to be established and encouraging generous 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 a local human need. New leaders are emerging as we seek to enable and equip those God is raising up in our midst for lay and ordained ministry. And our focus on children and young people is enabling creative thinking to raise up a new generation for Jesus Christ.



Over 85% of our parishes have a 'Vision Champion'. This is usually a lay appointment and the Champions' role is to encourage and support their parish leaders in pursuing the goals of Vision 2026 in a way that is appropriate for their local community.

Vision Champions from different parishes meet to share ideas and pray together

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.

Through prayer we see the grace and power of God who can alone bring renewal and growth. Our Diocesan Vision Prayer is:

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

Carolyn Barton, Diocesan Vision Coordinator



3. We Look After You

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. The diocese has an anti-bullying and anti-harassment policy.
- 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

4. Executive Summary

Lancaster St Mary (The Priory) is more commonly known as Lancaster Priory and is the Parish Church of St Mary, with St John and St Anne. It is one of England's major churches situated on a historic site overlooking Morecambe Bay and the mountains of the Lake District. The church is beautiful, built on a site where Christian worship has taken place for at least a thousand years. It receives a steady stream of tourists and pilgrims across the year who appreciate the special prayerful atmosphere. We offer richly catholic worship, traditional choral singing with a large robed choir and an excellent organ, which attracts worshippers and enhances the civic role of the Priory.

The Priory community is inclusive and aims to offer a welcome to all irrespective of age, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, or sexuality. There is a faithful core congregation with extensive abilities all supported by a large number of associate priests/ministers, licensed lay ministers and hard-working employees. Many opportunities are available for nurture in the faith and growing in discipleship, but we recognise the need to do more to build up the spiritual life of the community.

Active PCC groups are engaged with prayer and spiritual growth, fabric repair and maintenance, resources, environmental issues, and world & community issues. There are many other groups active within the congregation that meet for different purposes such as social interaction, supporting the homeless and promoting community cohesion.

A large number of children are involved in the choirs, as servers, and in Young Church. The church employs a part-time Schools and Family Learning Officer to oversee children's work and to develop links with local schools.

The congregation draws (50%) from the parish and (50%) from other parts of the city and villages on the periphery. The parish itself is diverse, including new housing developments which offer an opportunity for growth, and also deprived sections of the city, which pose a challenge for Christian witness. These two areas constitute one third of the parish population and the numbers from them coming to church are small indeed. The Priory employs a part time Community Outreach Worker.

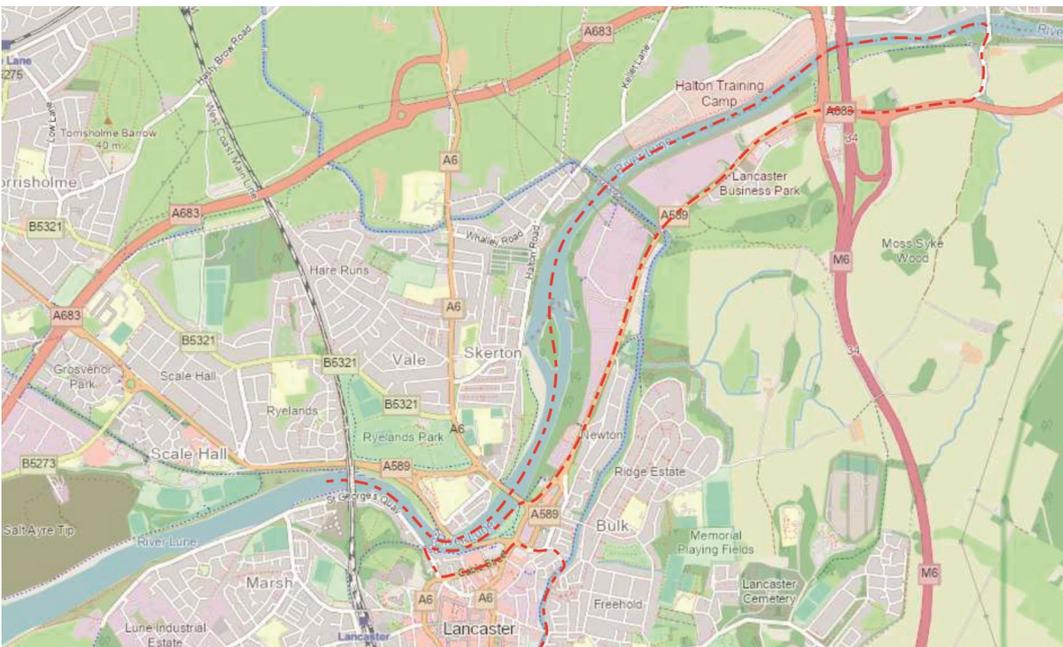
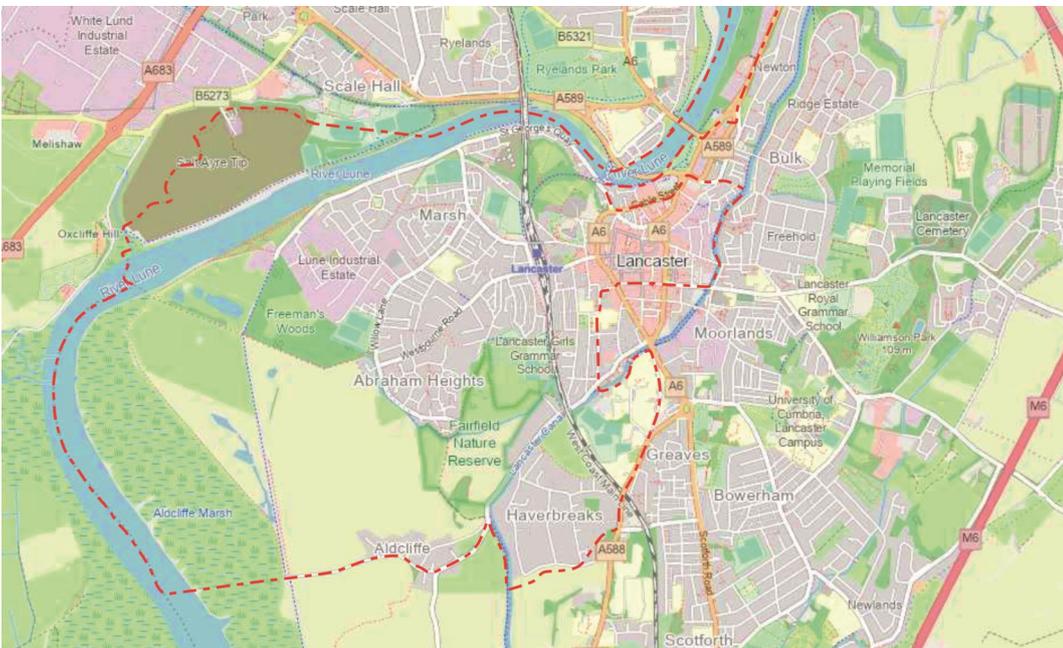
The Priory has taken a financial hit during the pandemic. However, with the careful use of our reserves and the commitment of parishioners we feel that our future is hopeful. We are committed to a future where we grow in faith and spirituality and expand our mission and service to the local community.

5.The Parish and Wider Community

Lancaster is situated in the north west of England and stands on the banks of the River Lune. To the west lies Morecambe Bay, to the east the hills of the Forest of Bowland and Yorkshire, to the south Preston, Blackpool and the Fylde and to the north the Lake District. Lancaster’s magnificent castle and the ancient Priory church command a prominent position overlooking the River Lune, set among fine Georgian buildings and Roman and Saxon remains. This conservation area has stunning views across Morecambe Bay to the Lakeland hills from both the church grounds and the adjacent vicarage.

Transport links are good – the West Coast main line offers easy travel to Manchester, London and Glasgow etc., and the M6 connects us north and south. The nearest airports are Manchester, Liverpool and Leeds.

The city of Lancaster and its surrounding villages has a population of around 146,038. Its main employers are education and health, especially the Royal Lancaster Infirmary and Lancaster University, one of the UK’s top ten universities. There is also the main campus of a second university, the University of Cumbria. Lancaster boasts a very popular Church of England Academy within the parish, two highly rated single sex state grammar schools and outstanding primary schools. The presence of large numbers of students in the city creates a vibrant and lively atmosphere.



The red dotted line indicates the parish boundary

The shopping centre, bus and railway stations are within a short walk of the church and vicarage and a network of cycle paths is easily accessible.

Culturally, Lancaster has a thriving music scene spanning the spectrum of classical through folk, jazz and rock. There are two theatres, a cinema and art house cinema. Annual festivals of literature, jazz and Light up Lancaster are well attended.

The Priory is a Grade 1 listed building standing on a site which has seen Christian worship since Saxon times. The carved 13th century Gothic choir stalls with their misericords are nationally famous. As one of England's Major Churches it is one of the most frequently visited parish churches in the North West and, particularly during the summer months, we welcome many visitors to our services.



View of the nave looking East

The Priory plays a significant role in the larger cultural life of the city. As described in more detail in section 7, it offers a substantial programme of concerts, recitals, lectures and other cultural events. The Christmas Spectaculars organized by the Music Department are regularly sold out as is the annual visit of The Sixteen. On a more modest scale the weekly coffee concerts on Saturday mornings are well attended and provide a performance space for young and local musicians. To make all this happen the church employs an Events Manager who works alongside the Director of Music.

The position of the Priory as a Grade 1 listed building on a historic site adjacent to the castle makes it an obvious tourist attraction. This is potentially an important source of income with potential for growth. More could be done to engage visitors with the building as a sacred space and not merely as a historic monument. This was demonstrated by the Museum of the Moon from 1-20 November 2019. This attracted 20,000 visitors to the Priory. Throughout these three weeks one of a team of lay and ordained chaplains was always present to talk to visitors and to answer their many questions. However, it is still surprisingly easy to find local residents who have never entered the building.



The Museum of the Moon

| PARISH DEMOGRAPHICS | |
|--|---------------------------|
| Population | |
| 11450 | |
| Age spread | |
| 0-4 | 5.5% |
| 5-15 | 9.5% |
| 16-64 | 71.3% |
| 65+ | 13.7% |
| Ethnic Mix* | |
| British | 92.2% |
| Minority Ethnic | 7.8% |
| Other Faith Mix** | |
| Christian | 53.9% |
| Muslim | 3.5% |
| Education background of population | |
| have no qualification | 15% |
| degree level or above | 28% |
| Employment | |
| lower managerial | 20% |
| administration professional | 10% |
| small employers | 5% |
| own account workers | Included in above figures |
| Major Employer(s) | |
| Morecambe Bay NHS Trust, Universities of Lancaster and Cumbria | |
| Deprivation Index | |
| least deprived 8917 th of 12382*** | Where 1 is least deprived |
| Child Poverty | |
| 20% | |
| Main Issues | |
| Housing Conditions | Mixed |
| Local Amenities | Good |
| Housing Mix | |
| Owner occupied | 55% |
| Social rented housing | 20% |

*Full breakdown: 92.2% White (may not all be British), 5.4% Asian, 0.9% Black, 1.2% Mixed, 0.3% Other

**A fuller breakdown is: 53.9% Christian, 0.7% Buddhist, 0.5% Hindu, 0.1% Jewish, 3.5% Muslim, 0.2% Sikh, 0.7% Other

***This means that of 12382 parishes, 8916 are less deprived than ours.

The part of the parish known as The Marsh (see map of the Parish), one of the deprived areas referred to in the Executive Summary, was previously served by a daughter church, St George's. This church, in an increasingly deteriorating condition, was closed some years ago. When this happened some former members of St George's became faithful members of the Priory family. Sadly, since then, the Priory has had little engagement (as referred to in the Executive Summary) with The Marsh. This is now being put right to some extent through the energies of the Priory Community Outreach Worker who is collaborating with representatives of other churches to re-establish a Christian presence in this area of multiple deprivation which has on its border a new housing development stretching along the banks of the River Lune. The Priory Church as a Civic Church located next to the castle on the hill above the Marsh has little shared culture with the people of a significant part of the parish. Nevertheless, it is host to many well attended baptisms, weddings and funerals from the area, which provide valuable points of contact to be pursued if resources were available.



The Regimental Chapel of the King's Own Royal Regiment

The position of the Priory as the civic church of the city and county of Lancashire provides opportunities for engagement with the local community. The vicar is responsible for leading many civic services and the Priory hosts the annual Mayor's Service, the Shield Hanging of the High Sheriff and the Holocaust Memorial service. The Priory Chapel of the King's Own Royal Regiment gives a continuing link to the armed forces. Royal visits have happened in the past and are anticipated to happen in the future as links with the Duchy of Lancaster are strong.

The Duchy of Lancaster, which is now developing the castle as a major tourist attraction, not least because of its history in the imprisonment and hanging of the Lancashire Witches, has supported a number of projects at the Priory.

The 'Black Lives Matter' movement has recently reminded us of the sad historic association of the church with the C18th Atlantic slave trade – and there are memorials to slave traders in the church and churchyard, sometimes a focal point for tourists. A new memorial to victims of this trade is being planned for the churchyard.

6. The Priory Community, its Worship and Mission

Worship of the gathered Priory community is at the heart of our life and mission and we rejoice in the rich catholic style of the liturgy and its musical expression. Our worship is focused on a Sunday Sung Eucharist, with Choral Evensong, early Sunday morning and weekday eucharists attracting their own particular congregations. Holy Week, Easter and Christmas celebrations, with a devotional focus and splendid liturgy, attract large numbers of townspeople and visitors.

The Priory congregation comprises a wide range of church traditions and is noteworthy for its commitment to mutual flourishing and inclusiveness. People are generally welcoming to newcomers, though there is always room for improvement. There is a substantial group of members whose commitment is longstanding but many of these are over retirement age. The attendance of younger people with families is more volatile, though some show a long-term commitment. Others come for a time with children who are choristers or servers, or who seek to qualify for entrance to Ripley St Thomas CE Academy by church attendance. There is an opportunity to build on this by encouraging people in this group to long-term commitment.

The Priory is a member of Churches Together in Lancaster and we are keen to nurture our ecumenical and inter faith relationships. This has been particularly welcomed for services such as Holocaust Memorial Day and International AIDS Day.

| CHURCH AND SERVICE | | |
|--|---|---------------------|
| Patron Three Patron Trustees plus ex officio Bishop of Blackburn and Bishop of Lancaster | | |
| Electoral Roll | | |
| Year 2020 | | |
| Number 158 51% of whom live in the Parish | | |
| Age Profile of the Church | | |
| 0-17 | | 28% |
| 18-69 | | 47% |
| 70+ | | 25% |
| Occasional Offices, Celebrations etc. | | |
| Baptisms | | 4 |
| Weddings | | 6 |
| Confirmation | Adult candidates | nil |
| | Under 16 candidates | nil |
| Funerals | in church | 1 |
| | at Crematorium | |
| Normal weekly attendance across all services | Adult | 250 |
| | under 16 | 20 |
| Festivals | | |
| Easter 2020 | | n/a due to pandemic |
| Christmas 2020 | Communicants | 167 |
| | For the streamed services during Christmas 2020: 808 people watched Nine Lessons and Carols, 198 watched Midnight Mass and 133 watched the Christmas Morning Eucharist. | |
| Our Services | | |
| Eucharists: Sundays 8.00 am BCP, 10.00 am live streamed (plus 4.00 pm Family Eucharist twice monthly not streamed) Tuesday 10.15 am BCP live streamed. Choral Evensong Sunday 6.30 pm live streamed. Morning Prayer 9.30 am Monday to Saturday live streamed. End of year and Christmas services for Ripley St Thomas Academy and local Grammar Schools. Daily Holy Week services. | | |

As 2020 has been such an unusual year, we offer statistics from the previous years to present a more accurate picture. These statistics have been taken from our annual submission to Parish Returns: 'Statistics for Mission'

| | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 |
|--|------|------|------|
| AGE PROFILE OF THE CHURCH | | | |
| 0-17 | 22% | 25% | 30% |
| 18-69 | 55% | 45% | 40% |
| 70+ | 23% | 30% | 30% |
| OCCASIONAL OFFICES, CELEBRATIONS etc. | | | |
| Baptisms | 40 | 43 | 51 |
| Weddings | 35 | 14 | 22 |
| Funerals | 16 | 11 | 23 |
| Normal Weekly Attendance | | | |
| Adult | 180 | 249 | 241 |
| Under 16 | 49 | 26 | 25 |
| Across all services | | | |
| Easter | 483 | 564 | 569 |
| Christmas | 901 | 805 | 1079 |

The two churchwardens enjoy the support of a 20 strong PCC and between them participate in most of the church's activities and committees. The following table shows the staff employed by the Priory and the various groups which meet in normal times.

THE PRIORY AND ITS PEOPLE

A) STAFF ON PAYROLL

Operations Manager/Head Verger (FT)
 3 Assistant Vergers (PT)
 Parish Secretary (PT)
 Director of Music (PT)
 Organist (PT)
 Events Manager (PT)
 Schools & Family Learning Officer (PT/50%)
 Community Outreach Worker (PT/50%)

B) TASK GROUPS

| NAME | PURPOSE | FREQUENCY |
|-----------------------------|--|-----------|
| Vicar/Wardens/Head Verger | Senior Leadership Team | weekly |
| Standing Committee | Overseeing PCC Agenda | monthly |
| PCC | Executive Team/Leading the Parish | monthly |
| Management Team | Co-ordinating the diary | monthly |
| Resources Committee | Overseeing Resources and Finance | regularly |
| Prayer and Spiritual Growth | Overseeing opportunities for growth in prayer and the deepening of spiritual life. | monthly |
| World and Community | Overseeing our response to need locally and in the wider world | regularly |

C) PARISH GROUPS AND ACTIVITIES

| NAME | ACTIVITY |
|------------------------------|---|
| 'Busy Hands, Quiet Hearts' | For women of working age to enjoy opportunities for fellowship and reflection through creative activities |
| East Meets West | For women from the Priory and from the Asian community to enjoy fellowship through shared activity |
| Junior Choir | Opportunity for children from local schools to meet after school each week and discover joy of singing |
| Lectio Divina | Ancient method of reading scripture with prayer and meditation |
| Mens Fellowship | Meeting occasionally for fellowship, a pub meal and a guest speaker |
| Mothers' Union | Fellowship for women of all ages; men also welcome |
| Mustard Seed | Providing an evening meal for homeless guests for 1 night each week across the colder months |
| Occasional Singers | An informal choir of all ages, providing cover for the Priory Choir on occasional Sundays across the year |
| Priory All Age Walking Group | Enjoying rambles (of moderate length) |
| Priory Choir | Leading worship at Eucharist, Evensong & special services |
| Sanctuary Guild | Caring for the vestments and sacred cloth of the church; undertaking new commissions |

Members of the Priory are active in supporting those in need in the local community through The Olive Branch, a local charity, which serves the socially disadvantaged and through Mustard Seed which provides a meal and friendship for homeless people once a week. The inter-faith women's group East Meets West now has a role in welcoming and supporting refugees who come to Lancaster as a City of Sanctuary. The needs of the wider world are kept in view by the Priory World and Community Group and by a monthly Traidcraft stall.

The Priory also has an active Mothers' Union, a Tuesday women's group, a recently started Men's Group and a Busy Hands Group which brings together working age women. The Priory Youth Group is led by the Schools and Families Worker together with the Community Outreach Worker. The Sanctuary Guild works on embroideries and tapestries for special services and occasions.

All these groups have been impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic.



Tapestries in the Choir Stalls

Across the year there are many opportunities for nurture in the faith. Lectio Divina meets monthly and recently two groups exploring Ignatian spirituality have been formed and meet weekly. There are also occasional series of talks and discussions offered by our Coffee and Theology group. Lent and Advent see the formation of several house groups which meet weekly to explore together aspects of our faith. There are also occasional quiet days, either in church or at a venue outside the parish including at a nearby Bernardine Cistercian Monastery. For those new to the faith, an 'enquirers' group meets every week, this in addition to preparation classes that precede baptism and confirmation. To support each other in our journey of faith, every Lent (for the past 5 years) members of the congregation have supplied a Thought for the Day, usually based on a Bible text, which has gone via email to a large list of subscribers. However, all of this activity is supported by a relatively small proportion of the congregation. If it is to continue and to flourish it must be encouraged and supported by our new incumbent.

Recently we have introduced fortnightly Sunday afternoon communion services aimed specifically for families with young children. For those who wish to receive communion in advance of confirmation an informal programme of introduction to the faith has been created.



Lancaster Priory has been among the pioneers in Creation Care in Blackburn diocese. We have an 'A Rocha' Bronze EcoChurch award for the ways in which our worship and prayer, our buildings and land, our community engagement and lifestyle acknowledge the generosity of God in his Creation and our responsibility to care for the environment and our fellow creatures. We are fully committed to the General Synod 2030 net zero carbon target, use the Energy Footprinting Tool and Parish Buying Energy Audit. Recent upgrades in our energy budgeting set us on course for EcoChurch Silver. A member of our ministry team, Revd Canon Professor John Rodwell is the Diocesan Environmental Officer, chair of the national Diocesan Environmental Officers' Land & Biodiversity group and a consultant to the Diocesan Advisory Committee.



**The picture shows the Blessing of Seeds at our Plough Sunday eucharist:
'Except a seed fall to the ground ...'**

Priory People also enjoy relaxing together. Coffee after morning service (and, on festal occasions, wine) is always popular. Fitter members meet together most months for a country ramble – 'Priory and All Ages Walking Group'. Usually at harvest time there is a supper and barn dance. The Choir Association is particularly active with picnics and meals out for choir members, their families and other friends from the congregation – a substantial proportion of the congregation. In recent years we had an active 'pilgrimage' group, organising visits to, and occasional residential stays at, sites of Christian significance. The most recent planned visit to the Holy Land was cancelled due to the pandemic. There has been an unavoidable lull in such activities – hopefully to be revitalised once the world returns to normal.

7. The Priory Music and Events

Choral music plays a large part in the weekly pattern of worship at Lancaster Priory. The Music Department currently comprises two salaried posts – a part-time Director of Music and a part-time Organist. There are treble lines for both boys and girls with an ATB back row singing with both treble lines. A Children’s Choir serves as a training group for the robed choirs.

The choirs are made up of local schoolchildren, volunteer adult singers, both men and women, Junior Choral Scholars in school Y10 and above, and Senior Choral Scholars drawn from Lancaster University. There is a Children’s Choir of up to twenty-five younger children led by two primary music specialists, which functions as a training choir before choristers join the treble line. This is an innovation of which we are rightly proud. The Occasional Singers—a choir made up from volunteer members of the congregation—cover for the robed choir’s absence during school holidays and are rehearsed by the Priory Organist. We frequently host visiting choirs for services and concerts throughout the year. There is capacity for three Organ Scholars at any one time, all funded by the Duchy of Lancaster; the Organ Scholars are taught by Ian Pattinson (FRCO).

Personal development and education are a high priority. Funded by grant making bodies to the PCC, Choral Scholars receive regular lessons from experienced opera singers, Christopher Steele and Sarah Jillian Cox. The Choir are always pleased and proud that the young people who join from primary school grow in both musicality and faith; they frequently stay until they graduate to university and, for some years, choristers have gone on to win prestigious choral and organ scholarships as well as studying music in universities nationwide. It is wonderful that so many of our alumni return to sing whenever they are back in Lancaster for university holidays.

The choral repertoire is varied, ranging from plainchant and renaissance polyphony through to modern works by living composers. Voluntaries are planned in advance to complement Mass and Evensong settings. Female and BAME composers appear with increasing frequency on the music list. Twice yearly a Jazz Mass is sung by the Choral Scholars and accompanied by local jazz musicians. The Director of Music’s new *Jazz Missa Brevis* was published by Sing for Pleasure in 2020.

Recently, Lancaster Priory has developed a reputation for commissioning of new music including Oliver Tarney’s *Missa Media Nocte* published by OUP in 2019. To support some Festal services, an orchestra of local professional musicians is brought in to enhance the musical offering.



Concerts and Events

The choir gives two extremely popular Christmas Concerts each year accompanied by the Festival Orchestra and joined by local primary school children. Each September, to celebrate the Priory’s Patronal Festival, a week-long *Festival of Song* is produced which culminates in a large-scale choral and orchestral concert. In recent years this Festival has featured daily lunchtime and rush hour concerts, late evening concerts, panel discussions, school workshops, masterclasses for choral scholars and Come and Sing events.

In order for Festival of Song and Christmas Concerts to grow in popularity, Lancaster Priory has had to improve and develop its marketing offering. Press Releases and Social Media coverage, through Facebook and Twitter, are growing steadily together with radio and TV coverage.

Distribution of leaflets locally and across a wider area is well established and large-scale events can now be successfully supported. The Events Manager liaises with the Music Department, wider church groups, Lancaster Partnerships and with outside groups and bookings.

Lancaster Priory is represented at Lancaster Arts Partnership meetings and excellent relationships have been fostered with local arts organisations.

A new chamber music strand is being worked up between the Priory and Lancaster Arts. A successful livestreamed partnership concert entitled *A Musical Sigh* was held during Lockdown 2 and will be further developed in March 2021.

Lancaster Priory has recently achieved recognition from the City Council as a 'Cultural Venue' as well as a 'Heritage Venue'. This has taken time and has occurred due to fostering an interest from Visit Lancaster, Lancaster Visitor Information Centre and Lancaster Business Improvement District in the weekly Saturday Coffee Concert strand which is now solidly established after an initial 6-week run in October 2017. A database of musicians and artists exists of people both very locally (which has been of exceptional value under Tier 3 and Lockdown 2 restrictions) and within the Northwest region.

The Events Manager looks after outside bookings from local and national music groups such as choral societies, schools and other individuals. Should groups opt for this, concerts and paid for events can be managed wholly in-house using Trybooking and our own Press and Publicity. Artists have the option of a unique tailored approach through use of a flexible booking system.

Relationships with national groups such as The Sixteen and English Touring Opera have grown over the last 4 years. These famous music groups return annually to sell-out audiences.

As well as local groups, large-scale events can be catered for. Notable popular events have been *Returning, We Hear The Larks – a creative, musical and dramatic installation for commemorating the 1st World War*; Luke Jerram's *Museum of the Moon* and *The Battle's O'er: The Armed Man*.

The tried and tested Trybooking system has been successfully utilised for Track-and-Trace. During the first lockdown, the decision was made to adopt livestreaming for services which has been very fortunate for concerts too. Saturday concerts were ready to go as soon as Lockdown 1 ended and were maintained as long as possible. The first *Online Tower Appeal Showcase*, with fundraising through JustGiving, encouraged parishioners and friends of the church to join together by sharing videos which led to a second Online Saturday Showcase later on in the pandemic.



Choir in the chancel at Choral Evensong

A monthly Music and Events E-newsletter goes out to a growing list of 380 recipients. A collection of photographs taken by a local photographer is very helpful to Lancaster Priory in many ways. Exhibitions take place several times a year and the Events Manager is currently liaising with refugees locally for an exhibition in the spring or summer. Responding to the Black Lives Matter campaign, Lancaster Priory Memorial Commissioning Group has been set up to consult with local groups about commissioning a piece of art from a BAME artist.

8. The Priory Buildings

The ancient Priory Church is acclaimed by everyone who comes. Its walls have absorbed generations of prayer and its atmosphere quickly evokes an awareness of the presence of God. It comprises nave, chancel and 3 adjacent chapels – one of which is the King's Own Royal Regimental Chapel. Here is an extensive collection of colours some of which were carried at the Battle of Waterloo. The two other chapels at the east end of the church are dedicated to St Thomas and St Nicholas. There is a gallery at the west end of the nave and the church can seat 550.

In recent years we have invested in a new sound system and within the last year we have completed Phase 1 of a new lighting scheme (narthex, nave and military chapel) and we hope to embark upon Phase 2 (chancel) during 2021, finances permitting. With the advent of live-streaming (as a response to the pandemic) we have invested in studio-quality cameras and microphones. All this infrastructure significantly improves the quality of our worship, as well as enhances the experience we can offer the many thousands of tourists who visit us each year. It also enables us to present concerts, recitals and lectures in a professional ambiance, and it is no surprise that we receive many requests for such events



View of the nave looking towards the West.

The church is equipped throughout with fixed stalls and pews – the north and south, east-end chapels alone afford flexible seating. Fixed seating has the advantage that it increases our capacity, but it does inhibit experimental and informal worship. The possibility of replacing pews with chairs is something we might seriously wish to consider in the future. There is a redundant area north of the chancel in the south aisle where outline plans have been drawn up to create an exhibition space. This is a project the PCC is keen to promote, as is the creation of a retail facility and (possibly) refreshment area at the west end. The regiment responsible for the regimental chapel are also interested in creating an exhibition space for their own memorabilia. The refectory provides a useful space for meetings but is in need of some refurbishment. The adjacent toilets are inadequate for the numbers attending, especially for concerts.

Above the refectory is a well-appointed song room, with a small clergy robing room adjacent to it. Above this is a small room which houses a large photocopier. Currently the parish office is situated in the Parvise above the porch. Access is via a spiral staircase. The location and size of the office are again inadequate to our needs and access presents Health and Safety concerns.

The church is generally in a good state of repair. All the items in List A and most in List B from the 2017 quinquennial report have been completed. Currently a heritage recovery grant of approx. £240,000 has enabled us to undertake important repairs to the tower to render it waterproof. In the near future essential work is needed to remove a redundant flue and to repair damage to the stonework beneath it.

The church is open 9 – 4 each day with a vergers on site throughout. On Sundays, apart from service times, the church is kept open in the afternoons, Spring – Autumn, through the good offices of volunteer 'church-sitters'.

Cleaning is undertaken by the Head Verger, supported by a team of assistant vergers who cover for her on her days off. The cleanliness of the church is maintained to a high standard.

The church complies with Health and Safety regulations. In such an isolated situation, lone-working is a particular concern and this is something we keep under regular review. All equipment is maintained and checked in accordance with regulations and the manufacturer's instructions.

There is good disabled access to all areas of the church, except to the office and tower. Whilst the pews in the nave are fixed, there are wheelchair spaces and it is possible to access the communion rail without steps.



The Bell Chamber

There are no burials in the churchyard. These ceased in 1850. Interment of ashes takes place in the memorial garden on the north west corner of the church. This garden is maintained by the Head Verger. The churchyard is maintained by Lancaster City Council. Car parking near the church is difficult (currently there are spaces for about 6 cars under the tower). There are ongoing discussions between the PCC and City Council to create more parking spaces in the churchyard. Similarly, there are further discussions with a view to remodelling the churchyard and creating a more attractive and eco-friendly environment.

The tower houses a ring of ten bells. The tower captain is very keen and under her bells are rung regularly for morning and evening services. The ringing frame will need to be replaced within the next five years and the bells rehung. Once this happens we will have one of the best rings of ten bells in the North of England.

Some distance from the church (200 metres) is the Priory Hall administered by the Priory Hall Trust. The lower hall, though administered by the Priory Hall Trustees, is physically separate and is leased long-term as a cafe. The upper hall is available for church events and private lettings. 'Mustard Seed' our project supporting homeless people uses this hall one evening each week from Autumn through to Spring. Recently there has been significant refurbishment, including a new commercial standard kitchen, and plans are in an advanced state to work with Global Village Café, a private enterprise which trains refugees and asylum seekers in catering skills. Overall the Priory Hall generates a useful income and the deeds of the Trust permit the Trustees to use this to support the mission and outreach of the Priory. The Vicar chairs the meeting of the trustees.



The Priory Vicarage

The vicarage was built in 1965 of distinctive design on several levels. It was altered in the 1980s. It occupies a wonderful situation next to the church with commanding views and has good accommodation. The diocese has responsibility for the vicarage.

9. The Priory's Finances

Current financial status:

At 31.12.19, cash and investment balances totalled £523,258 comprising:

£226,718 restricted & designated funds

£14,776 bookshop funds

£15,754 Marsh funds

£266,010 general funds, including legacy of £85,000 earmarked for lighting scheme.

Income / expenditure higher in 2019 due to Museum of the Moon installation – profit in the region of £29k excluding additional heating / lighting costs.

Income in 2020 reduced due to pandemic.

General fund cash and investment balances reduced to £153,447 by 31.11.20 – due to expenditure on lighting installation and also reserves used due to reduction in income.

Deficit budget of £77k for 2021 based on conservative estimates due to uncertainty around pandemic.

Stewardship:

In 2015 we conducted a very successful 'Priory People' initiative. Amongst other excellent outcomes, it raised the level of committed giving by 34%. It was intended that we conduct a similar stewardship campaign in 2020, but no progress could be made because of the pandemic. Another campaign is due, probably using the diocesan 'Generosity, Gift & Grace' programme. We believe we need to develop a greater culture of generosity and giving in the Priory and perhaps to have a specific leader to focus on this work. This culture developing would ultimately be reflected in a healthier picture for our community financially especially in terms of committed giving.

Other money raised from:

Visitors – church boxes, votives

Offertories

Sundry donations

Gift Aid tax reclaimed

Hire of church building to outside organisations for concerts and events

Coffee shop – limited opening and catering for events

Rent from telecommunications mast in church tower

In house Christmas concerts etc

Wedding & funeral fees

Grants for specific projects & expenditure: The Priory has been fortunate to have been awarded a grant from the Cultural Recovery Fund of £245,000 for essential repairs to the Tower. To add to this the Priory raised £65,000 from the congregation and grants.

Expenses:

Incumbent's expenses paid on claim:

Telephone, mobile phone & internet

Travel expenses

Any other working expenses

Vicarage expenses paid direct by PCC:

Council Tax

Water rates

Cleaner (if required)

Gardener (if required)

| CHURCH FINANCES | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Finance Returns | |
| Year | 2019 |
| <i>Description</i> | <i>Amount £</i> |
| Parish Income | Unrestricted: £376,627; Restricted: £58,899 |
| Tax Efficient Planned Giving | £72,902 |
| Amount per person per week | £12.10 |
| Parish Expenditure | £81,115 |
| Parish Share Assessed | Y |
| Parish Share Paid | £75,329 + £5,786 DBF fees |

10. Our Schools

There are 2 primary schools within the parish, Dallas Road CP and Willow Lane CP, and a Steiner School. The church enjoys good links with both primary schools – children from them have taken part in ‘sing-a-long’ events in church in previous years. The church has appointed a part-time Schools and Families Worker to co-ordinate and further develop links with schools. In addition our Community Outreach Worker is cultivating links with Willow Lane CP as part of her outreach work on the Marsh Estate. Lancaster has a high achieving and successful church secondary school – Ripley St Thomas Church of England Academy. The incumbent is a governor and the PCC also appoints a school governor. Many Ripley children attend the Priory and end of term services and Awards Evening are also held in the church. The current Director of Music at the Priory is also Assistant Principal and Director of Music at Ripley. This means that many children in the choir are Ripley students. Places at Ripley are in great demand and many families attend the Priory in the hope of securing admission. This presents us with great missional opportunities.

11. Our Links Into the Wider Community



Choir processing for Remembrance Service

Because the Priory is the civic church, the incumbent is expected to be involved in leading all the civic services and the links with County and City are strong. The Regimental Chapel is greatly loved by the Duke of Lancaster Regiment and this connection leads to a number of other services. The High Sheriff and Judges services, the Mayor’s Sunday and Remembrance Sunday all provide us with opportunities. But these services have no elitist feel – they involve people we know and who feel at home with us. Over Christmas the Lord Lieutenant, the High Sheriff, The Mayor, the RC Bishop of Lancaster and the Vice Chancellor of Lancaster University will all worship with us.

12. Our Vision

We are greatly blessed to be entrusted with a beautiful ancient church situated on a site which has seen Christian worship for over 1000 years. We are keen to ensure that in our generation the Priory will grow in influence and significance as a beacon of the Good News of God's Kingdom as it has been throughout the preceding centuries.

We believe we are at a very exciting moment in our story. Our Priory family is committed, supportive and friendly. We value difference and encourage mutual flourishing. There is a real dynamic to grow in faith, mission and service.

Above all, our commitment to our faith is expressed in our rich, catholic, choral tradition and this makes us unique amongst the churches in the northern sector of this large diocese. We want to use this distinctive tradition to resource and support other churches and to develop our mission to those parts of our parish which have been relatively untouched. We firmly believe that music can be used to develop new communities of worshipping families and we are keen to seek ways of pushing ahead with this when the current pandemic regulations permit.

The city of Lancaster – though attractive, well situated and culturally rich – has its fair share of social and economic deprivation, not least within the boundaries of our own parish in the old estate of the Marsh. As has been said, this estate, along with the neighbouring new Luneside development, comprises almost 1/3rd of our parish population and is largely unreached by the church. There is an opportunity to plant new congregations in this part of the Parish. We are also committed to making our own contribution to solving the many social problems which are thrown up and made more acute in the current times. Supporting families and young people will continue to be part of our mission together with offering friendship to the many elderly people who reside in this part of the city. To spearhead our work in this area, we have appointed a Community Outreach Worker. We believe that we have been given a remarkable opportunity through the witness of word and service to proclaim the message of God's unconditional love.

The Priory is committed to the objectives of the Diocesan Vision 2026. A Vision Champion has been commissioned who actively promotes the Vision 2026 at the Priory with the support of a small group. The opportunities offered by Diocesan events and resources have been publicised including the Festivals at the Cathedral and quiet days at Whalley Abbey (the Diocesan retreat house) and at St Joseph's House of Prayer at Tunstall. Since the start of the pandemic the Vision Champion has produced a new set of prayers each week. These are posted on the Priory's website and circulated to all those on the Priory People email list. She also writes a weekly reflection based on a passage of scripture and, on a different day, these too, are circulated to all those on the Priory People email list.

There seems to be a new spirit growing within the Priory family which we are keen to see flourish – Lectio Divina has continued via Zoom during the pandemic as have two groups on Ignatian Spirituality. These will need support from our new vicar if they are to continue and develop. Plans for Lent Groups are well advanced and this year we will be using the Pilgrim course material to study the Eucharist. We believe this can only strengthen our growth in faith and discipleship.

The Priory continues to be a significant player in the cultural life of our city and we are keen to enhance our contribution whether that be by important lecture series in conjunction with the universities, stimulating concert programmes especially those featuring young, local musicians, and dramatic installations on important celebrations. We value these as a means to engage with sectors of the community who are attracted to this diversity of culture. We believe it demonstrates that the Christian life can be rich and full.

The Mission Action Plan is currently under review ([Towards a Vision and Strategy](#)) but in the meantime we seek to be a Christian community in which our experience of the love of God flows out in service to others. We want to be people whose lives are guided by fundamental principles of the teaching of Jesus. The Five Marks of Mission encapsulate our purposes as follows:

- To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom (Tell)
- To teach, baptize and nurture new believers (Teach)
- To respond to human need by loving service (Tend)
- To transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation (Transform)
- To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth (Treasure)

13. What We Offer

The Covid-19 pandemic has impacted dramatically on the life of the church. The periods of lockdown prompted the development of live streaming most of our services and Morning Prayer on our Facebook page. A virtual community has developed with 'members' joining us from all parts of the country and indeed the world and we envisage that this will continue even when life returns to normal. We have been fortunate in securing a grant to enhance our ability to stream both services and concerts and several young people are involved in learning how to use the filming equipment.

Our congregation is diverse and lively and ready to respond to new challenges. They value the atmosphere of openness and honesty, where questions and doubts are treated respectfully and where there is ample opportunity for nurture in the faith and growth in discipleship. The church is well loved by its members and several are second or even third generation of worshippers here. At the same time there is a steady stream of newcomers – many associated with the two universities in the city. We are proud of what previous incumbents have achieved and look forward to supporting our next vicar in the coming years. We believe the future for the Priory can be extremely positive in its contribution to the parish, the diocese and to the city of Lancaster.

The Priory Team which oversees the day to day running of activities is headed up by our Operations Manager/Head Verger. She is supported by three part time Assistant Vergers who are all skilled and knowledgeable in matters of liturgy and occasional offices.

Our work on the Marsh and Luneside Estates is fronted by our Community Outreach Worker (part time) and work with children and young people is spearheaded by our Schools and Family Liaison Officer, again part time. Both posts are funded by charitable monies.

We are fortunate in having three Licensed Lay Ministers who are active in the Parish and twelve Honorary Associate Priests together with one Honorary Associate Methodist Minister who support the Vicar by participating in services. Also four sub deacons are rostered to assist in the Priory Eucharist on Sunday mornings. We also count ourselves fortunate that we have many lay people, with an important range of skills and experience, ready to take on leadership roles within the church. Identifying and deploying the skills of lay people is an area we wish to develop.

The Vicar carries important responsibilities outside the parish. There are 18 parishes both urban and rural of which the vicar is patron. The vicar also chairs two important local trusts which support the work of education, and is also a member of Lancaster Charities which provides housing for local residents of modest means.

All predecessors in living memory have been installed as Honorary Canons of Blackburn Cathedral during their time with us.

14. Who is God calling?

We are looking for a Vicar who will be so excited both by what we have to offer and what we now aspire to do that s/he will want to join us and lead us forward on the next stage of our journey.

Essential Qualities – for shortlisting

We seek an experienced Parish Priest who:

- Has a track record of leading a church into growth. A person who can develop, share, and lead a consistent long-term vision for the Priory as a major church in the modern catholic tradition, having a distinctive role in the city and the Diocese.
- Values inclusiveness and mutual flourishing of all people as equally loved by God. A person who is able to relate effectively to people with a wide range of social standing, experience, ability, education and church traditions.

- Has a passion for preaching and pastoral care and seeks to promote the Priory's commitment, spirituality and outreach to the whole parish.
- Encourages congregational engagement in worship, based on their own deep personal spirituality, that opens the way for people to experience the love of God in Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. A person who values our tradition of choral worship but who recognises the need and opportunity for developing new congregations with other styles and modes of worship.
- Will share ministry and delegate responsibility by drawing on the abilities and experience of clergy and laity in the pursuit of the Priory's long term vision, focusing on the core role of a Parish Priest, while maintaining effective oversight.
- Can build beneficial relationships with external groups including the Diocese, local churches, other religious groups, the Regiment, the Duchy, the Castle and tourist agencies.

Desirable qualities – for selection

Experience of:

- Working in a major church
- Leading choral worship
- Ministry to families and young people
- Building new congregations with fresh expressions of worship
- Using digital media and the internet effectively
- Spiritual direction
- Evangelism
- Curate training

13. Our Priory Vision Prayer

Almighty God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
 we pray that your Holy Spirit may be with us,
 that we may worship you in the beauty of holiness,
 call others to follow you as disciples in today's world,
 witness to our faith among our communities,
 grow leaders to inspire many to serve you,
 and reach out in Jesus' name
 to all who need your saving love and grace. Amen