



# LANCASTER PRIORY

## Associate Vicar Application Pack



**THE**  
**DIOCESE**  
**OF**  
**BLACKBURN**  
THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND IN LANCASHIRE



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## Welcome from the Vicar

Thank you for your interest in the post of Associate Priest at Lancaster Priory. This appointment is a significant appointment for us as we begin to shape the next phase of our parish's life in line with our emerging vision. Be assured that the successful candidate will be joining a team of people who are fully committed to the flourishing of mission and ministry at the heart of our parish and across the wider Diocese of Blackburn. I hope that the pack encourages you to consider applying, and we look forward to hearing from you.

The Revd Leah Vasey-Saunders  
Vicar of Lancaster

## About this Role

Lancaster Priory is at the beginning of a new phase in mission and ministry, following the arrival of a new incumbent in September 2021 and as it looks to launch a new vision and strategic plan in November. The need to create a role to address the missional priorities in the parish has been a key part of this emerging vision. It led to participation in a recent successful Diocesan bid for Strategic Mission Funding designed to establish four posts of first responsibility (suitable for candidates approaching the end of curacy) in the diocese. One of these posts will be an Associate Priest at the Priory. You can read more about SMF on the Church of England website: <https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/diocesan-resources/ministry/strategic-ministry-fund>.

### Mission Priorities

The PCC has identified four missional priorities that are key in the next 5 years. These are described on pages 4-5. These priorities are not ranked in order and are all equally important to the PCC. This role will have primary responsibility for delivering two of these priorities. Alongside priority four (Caring better for God's creation) we are asking candidates to consider which of the first two priorities they might have the gifts and experience to lead on. It is envisaged that the successful candidate will work alongside the vicar across the whole parish, working to each other's strengths. These priorities are:

Firstly, the existing Priory congregations are committed to a process of investing in families, children and young people in order to grow younger and raise up a new generation of disciples and leaders. This would build on current outreach work to families, the existing plan for youth and children's work development, the all age service and our strong links with local schools and universities.

Secondly, there is a desire to engage in distinctively Christian outreach and to build a new Christian worshipping community on the Marsh Estate that is both rooted in the context of the Marsh and supported and resourced by the Priory as a vibrant part of their parish. This would build on the existing Sunday afternoon congregation and the ministry of the community worker to reach out in mission and evangelism to the Marsh.

In order to resource these two projects and successfully develop outreach in our parish and to maintain a significant sized congregation and civic ministry, with the support of the Diocese of Blackburn and the Church of England Strategic Mission Fund, Lancaster Priory are seeking to appoint an 'Associate Priest' to work as part of a revitalised ministry team (lay and ordained) in developing this work over the next five years.

If you would like an informal conversation about this role, please be in touch with Revd Leah Vasey-Saunders [vicar@lancasterpriory.org](mailto:vicar@lancasterpriory.org).

## Diocese and Diocesan Vision

The Blackburn Diocese is often called ‘the Church of England in Lancashire’ as the borders of the Diocese and County are virtually the same. It has also been called ‘England in miniature’ as its social and geographical characters echo the variety of the country.

The Diocese is committed to Vision 2026: ‘Healthy Churches Transforming Communities’.

We desire to make the Good News about Jesus Christ more widely known, because we believe:

- He is the One who brings ‘life in all its fullness’
- Healthy church communities have a positive and transformative impact on our society.

We will work together to achieve this by:

**Making disciples**

**Being witnesses**

**Growing leaders**

**Inspiring Children and Young People**

You can find out more about our diocese and it’s vision on the diocesan website: <https://www.blackburn.anglican.org/>.

### The Diocesan Vision Prayer

Heavenly Father, we embrace Your call for us to make disciples, to be witnesses, to grow leaders and inspire children and young people. 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



*Licensing of Assistant Archdeacons 2022*

## Emerging Vision and Priorities

We believe we are at a very exciting moment in the story of Lancaster Priory. The Priory community is committed, supportive and friendly. The PCC has discerned missional priorities for the next 5 years and is convinced of the need to embrace change.

Lancaster Priory has four particular strengths through which we are able to describe it's ministry and outreach. We believe these form a core part of our identity, gifting and calling.

### Worship

As a part of the church, we are called to respond together to the call of God to relationship and worship.

### Christian Education

We believe we are called to enable people to grow more deeply into the image and character of God as expressed in the person of Jesus Christ and to ensure that they are equipped and empowered, as disciples, to be effective in mission and evangelism.

### Community, Compassion and Kindness

We believe we are called to be a compassionate community that is engaged in acts of kindness, care and social justice.

### Innovation, Creativity and Commerce

We believe that we are called to be wise stewards of the gifts that God has given us, and that God has given us all that we need to fulfil his will for us in this season. We therefore seek to be creative and innovative with all of our gifts and resources.

## Priorities

At their away day in July 2022 the PCC discerned four priorities for the next 5 years. The action plans for these priorities are under development in preparation for the launch of the new Priory vision in November. Although the successful applicant will be expected to support this vision in it's entirety, they will have particular responsibility over two missional priorities. That will be either priority one or two (depending on the candidate appointed) and priority four.

### One: Inspiring new generations.

Although Lancaster Priory has an able and committed core of lay people, these are largely drawn from amongst the retired. Those of a working age are often more peripheral to the life of the church. University students can struggle to make links with the rest of the congregation. As the Priory emerges from the pandemic, it is clear that the work of evangelism and mission with children, young people and their families has suffered. There is a strong cohort of choir families who are committed to the priory but not necessarily well integrated into its life and ministry. We long for the Priory congregation to become broader and more diverse, better representative of our parish and city.



*The Marsh Community Centre*

### Two: Growing deeper roots on the Marsh.

The Marsh estate, which is amongst the more deprived areas of the city, comprises almost 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of our parish population along with the neighbouring new Luneside development and is largely unreached by the church. We believe we are called to invest in evangelism and mission in this part of our parish, to plant new congregations, as well as continuing the work of supporting families and young people and offering friendship to the elderly. We believe that we have been called to witness through word and service to proclaim the message of God's unconditional love on the Marsh.

### Three: A Resource for the City, Diocese and Region

The Priory has a recognised role within the city and region as a civic church. The annual pattern of civic engagements that come from universities, schools, city and county continue to be significant but we believe that we are called to develop a distinctive Christian voice within these relationships. The Priory is recognised as a significant and distinctive church within the diocese, but has not historically done much to resource other churches. We believe we are called to be a place of teaching and learning that empowers the people of God in a way that will benefit the whole diocese, and we seek to develop new ministries in this area.

### Four: Caring better for God's Creation

Lancaster Priory has been among the pioneers in Creation Care in Blackburn diocese, holding an 'A Rocha' Bronze EcoChurch award. We are fully committed to the General Synod 2030 net zero carbon target, use the Energy Footprinting Tool and Parish Buying Energy Audit. Recognising the crucial significance of the next five years in global efforts to prevent catastrophic climate change, we are committed to doing all we can at church and in our own lives to protect God's creation, and acknowledge the generosity of God in his Creation.

## Prayer and Worship

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. The congregation draws (50%) from the parish and (50%) from other parts of the city and villages on the periphery. 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.

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.

### The Liturgical and Musical Tradition

The Priory's pattern of worship has been established over many years. The Priory has latterly moved from a more central liberal spirituality to one that is more catholic and now includes a regular all age service. Choral music plays a large part in the weekly pattern of worship at Lancaster Priory.

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.

#### Pattern of Worship: Sunday

08.00 Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer, said)  
 10.00 Sung Eucharist  
 (contemporary language, All Age 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday each month)  
 16.00 Families@Four (4<sup>th</sup> Sunday only)  
 18.30 Choral Evensong

#### Monday to Saturday

08.00 Morning Prayer  
 10.15 Holy Communion, Book of Common Prayer (Tuesday)  
 17.00 Evening Prayer

The pattern of weekday eucharistic services is still rebuilding post pandemic and is under review. The Priory is a civic church for the city and county with a variety of civic services taking place each year.

The priory is regularly used for occasional services (baptisms, weddings, funerals, services of thanksgiving) and services requested by voluntary groups (especially for school carol services during December). We see these evangelistic opportunities, in which we have an opportunity to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ to a wider audience.



Gaia 2022



Palm Sunday 2022



Mother's Union 2022



Solidarity with Ukraine 2022



Threads Through Creation 2021

## Parish and People

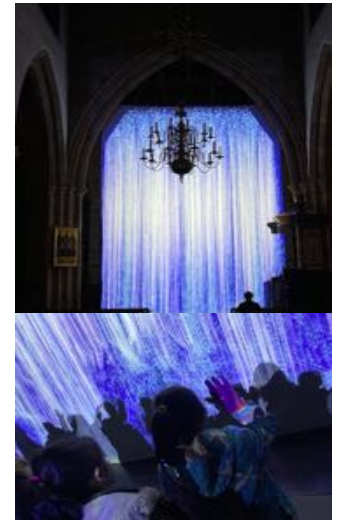


Lancaster St Mary (The Priory) is more commonly known as Lancaster Priory and is the Parish Church of St Mary, with St John and St Anne. It is one of England's major churches and one of the most significant churches in the north of the diocese (circa. 200 adults RWA).

The Priory plays a significant role in the larger cultural life of the city. It offers a substantial programme of concerts, recitals, lectures and other cultural events. The church is open 9 – 4 each day with a verger on site throughout.

The Priory currently employs a full-time head verger/operations manager and then a number of part-time workers: 3 vergers, events manager, administrator, community worker, director of music, choral animateur and an organist.

Lancaster Priory parish in the city of Lancaster is a parish containing both the ancient heart of the city and the Marsh Estate, which is a deprived social housing estate. Recent housing developments have also created a new owner-occupier estate, the 'New Marsh'. The parish population was 9,493 at the 2011 census but will now be higher. Although there are regular connections with the Marsh Estate through occasional offices the majority of the regular congregation are gathered from elsewhere. Since 2019 the Priory has employed a Community Worker on the Marsh with the help of Lottery funding. This has established social capital and continues to resource activities that respond to social need but the nature of the funding stream precludes this work from having an explicitly Christian content. The Priory Community Worker is collaborating with members of the congregation and some other churches and the Marsh Community Centre in developing and running activities which are predominantly community development and social justice based. These have evolved from a community consultation.



*Light Up Lancaster 2021*

The part of the parish known as The Marsh, one of the economically deprived areas of the parish, was previously served by a daughter church, St George's. This church, in an increasingly deteriorating condition, was closed some years ago. Some former members of St George's became regular worshippers at the Priory but since the closure of St Georges, the Priory presence on the Marsh has been minimal. Nevertheless, the Priory is host to many well attended baptisms, weddings and funerals from the area, which provide valuable opportunities for evangelism and discipleship.

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 and able core congregation supported by a number of retired clergy, licensed lay ministers and employees. The vicar has recently formed a new ministry team consisting of 3 LLMs, a community worker and a curate. It is hoped that a larger pastoral care team will be formed in the Autumn.

There is currently one churchwarden and two assistant wardens, who enjoy the support of a 20 strong PCC and between them participate in most of the church's activities and committees. 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 bible study, spirituality and prayer, social interaction, supporting the homeless and promoting community cohesion.

The Priory Youth Group is led by the vicar working together with others and is beginning to regroup post pandemic and a small but stable young church meets in term time apart from on All Age Sundays. The vicar has begun to explore what work with students might look like but as yet there is no regular activity.



The Priory has had a season of focus on the discipleship and spirituality of its existing congregation and has a renewed sense of urgency to engage in more evangelistic outreach to its parish.

## The City of Lancaster

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. The presence of large numbers of students in the city creates a vibrant and lively atmosphere.

The shopping centre, bus and railway stations are within a short walk of the church 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.

### 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. Lancaster has a high achieving and successful church secondary school – Ripley St Thomas Church of England Academy. 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. Lancaster Girls Grammar School is also within the parish.



*Lancaster, photograph by Darren Andrews, used with permission.*

## Role Description

This Role Description should be read in conjunction with the application pack and the Guidelines for the Professional Conduct of the Clergy which apply to all in ordained office and is subject to review. The successful candidate will have a ministry agreement which is reviewed every three months in the first year as the mission priorities develop. It is envisaged that this candidate will lead on either priority one or two and priority four.

### General Responsibilities

As a key leader of our Priory team, you will play a full part in all areas of ministry and mission serving the wider town and Deanery and contributing to our emerging vision for the future. This will be rooted in prayer and through the development of good relationships and communication with the vicar, Priory staff and volunteers, including the following responsibilities:

- To participate fully as a member of the ministry team.
- To take an active role in worship, preaching and pastoral care across the whole parish.
- To attend PCC and other meetings as appropriate. Chairing the PCC twice a year, and other working groups as appropriate.
- To work alongside the vicar in developing the parish's ministry to schools.  
To participate in the parish's ministry to the wider area when appropriate (civic and community).
- To fully participate in and contribute to the life of the Deanery (including Chapter and Synod) and Diocese.
- To undertake such additional duties as reasonably required by the vicar.
- To lead and serve the congregations of the parish as directed by the vicar and in collaboration with other members of the ministry team.
- To have oversight for occasional office ministry, and as part of the ministry team develop preparation, planning and a coherent system of relationship building, ensuring that good effective follow up is part of our nurture and discipleship.
- Have the flexibility to respond to the outcomes of our parish strategic plans, you will use your gifts to develop specific areas of responsibility and oversight in conversation with the vicar.

### Key and Missional Responsibilities for Priority One: Inspiring New Generations

- To develop children's and youth work.
- To develop work with students.
- Build pathways for newcomers and those on the fringes of church to better integrate into the life of the church and community.
- To recruit, develop and oversee volunteers and new ministries within these areas of mission.
- To develop the evangelistic skills of the congregation through appropriate resources and activities.
- Develop an appropriate alternative expressions of prayer, study and worship to engage new generations (in sympathy with our tradition).
- To oversee our digital ministries and communications with our strengths and priorities in mind.

### Key and Missional Responsibilities for Priority Two: Growing deeper roots on the Marsh

- To lead a parish team who will develop community projects and mission on the Marsh estate.
- To develop and oversee volunteers and new ministries within that area of mission.
- To build a new worshipping congregation on the Marsh which is set within the ethos and vision of the parish and has appropriate and positive connections to the priory.
- To develop sustainability and clear goals to enable the Marsh community and church plant to play its part in the delivery of the vision and strategy of the priory.
- To supervise and line-manage the community worker. Whose primary focus of ministry is the Marsh estate and take oversight of all activities in that part of the parish.

### Key and Missional Responsibilities for Priority Four: Caring better for God's Creation

- To have oversight of the lay-led EcoChurch team in empowering them to achieve silver/gold status.
- To develop and oversee volunteers and new ministries within this area of mission.
- To have responsibility for the development of a PCC strategy for the 2030 net zero goal.
- To raise awareness of environmental issues across the congregations through study and worship.
- Develop key partnerships within the parish and city.



## Training and Development

The Priory offers a broad and diverse range of opportunities to grow in experience of leadership, mission and evangelism for the successful candidate. We hope that the successful candidate will find themselves encouraged to grow in many ways as their vocation develops. There will be support and encouragement to engage with Continuing Ministerial Development and in seeking out training and development opportunities beyond the Diocese.

## Safeguarding

All staff and volunteers are expected to demonstrate a commitment to safeguarding the welfare of all children and adults who may be vulnerable, who are involved with and/or visit the Priory. The successful candidate will be required to undertake regular mandatory training and adhere to policies and procedures, following good practice in relation to their own behaviour and conduct and undertaking any safeguarding duties commensurate with their specific role.

# Person Specification

We are seeking a priest who:

## Essential

- has previous experience of estate ministry and/or ministry to students, children and young people.
- has an excitement about their faith, is reflective and prayerful, and makes time for their own spiritual health and development e.g. retreats, wider interests and spiritual direction.
- will be committed to mission and evangelism in the catholic tradition.
- will be committed to the development plans of Lancaster Priory as set out in this document.
- is a person who treasures both word and sacrament and can lead worship prayerfully and confidently.
- has experience of nurturing children, young people and adults in the Christian faith.
- values the richness of Anglican choral and liturgical spirituality whilst having a creative and pioneering spirit, open to new possibilities of outreach and ministry.
- is a good communicator who can inspire people of all ages and backgrounds.
- is a team player and team leader, able to encourage collaboration.
- is a person capable of building and leading effective teams.
- demonstrates a maturity of character and a good sense of humour.
- has the ability to stay calm under pressure.
- is willing to receive constructive criticism and adapt.
- is a well organised, confident user of IT who will self-manage and prioritise their workload effectively, maintaining a good work/life balance.
- demonstrates a commitment to the full inclusion of all, with special regard to age, ability, gender identity, sexuality, religion, economic status, social class, and ethnicity.
- is committed to current Safeguarding culture and procedures.

## Desirable

- has a theology degree.
- has church planting experience.
- has experience of significant engagement in estate ministry and/or ministry to students, children and young people.
- has experience of EcoChurch or other resources for climate action.
- has Line management experience.
- has experience of using ChurchSuite or another data management system.

## Terms and Conditions

Housing will be provided in the parish.

The office is an interim post made under regulation 29 of the Ecclesiastical Offices (Terms of Service) Regulations 2009. The initial appointment period is for 3 years but this may be extended once for a further 2 years.

The role is subject to satisfactory completion of the Church of England Safer Recruitment and People Management Guidance.

## How to apply

Please apply via the pathways system: <https://pathways.churchofengland.org/search>  
The deadline for applications is midnight on the 21<sup>st</sup> of November.

## Interviews

Interviews will take place in Lancaster on the 8th of December.

Shortlisted candidates will be asked to prepare a 10 minute presentation on their choice of either mission priority one (Inspiring new generations) or two (Growing deeper roots on the Marsh) for the formal interview.

They will also be asked to meet and greet an informal panel representing aspects of the parish life and mission.