

The Right Reverend Philip North has today been announced by 10 Downing Street as the next Bishop of Blackburn. Bishop Philip currently serves as the Bishop of Burnley in the Diocese of Blackburn, and as Bishop of Blackburn he will lead the whole diocese, serving people and communities across Lancashire.



The King approved the nomination of Bishop Philip, who will succeed the Right Reverend Julian Henderson after his retirement last year. The announcement was made this morning as Bishop Philip visited St Christopher's Church of England High School in Accrington, where he spoke with pupils about his vision for the Church in Lancashire.

Speaking about the announcement, Bishop Philip said:

"I believe with all my heart that God has called me to carry Jesus across Lancashire, to bear witness to his love and peace here in this county. I have done that for the past eight years as Bishop of Burnley, and I will go on doing that as Bishop of Blackburn. I am delighted to be staying in a county that I love very deeply indeed, delighted also that we will be able to carry on the work here in **Blackburn Diocese**.

"There are three things for which I will be labouring tirelessly in the years to come. Firstly, I am committed to continuing the growth of the church in Lancashire, helping to build joyful Christian communities. Secondly, I would love to see the Church of England in Lancashire being an ever-stronger voice for justice, especially for the poorest.

"And thirdly, I believe children and young people need to be at the very heart of all that we do. The current generation of young people is such an impressive one, with a real desire to build a better world. Yet at the same time I know that life is not always easy for them. There are such exciting opportunities for young people in Lancashire – we need to see more.

"There is so much going for the Diocese of Blackburn – inspirational schools, great parishes, vibrant chaplaincies, committed clergy, a wonderful leadership team. I know that, with God's help, we can do something amazing here. I look forward to working together with people across the county to celebrate Christ in Lancashire, so that everyone can know his love and his peace and his justice."

Bishop Philip will formally take up his new role in May or June 2023. The Right Reverend Dr Jill Duff, the Bishop of Lancaster, chaired the consultation process locally that has led to Bishop Philip's nomination.

Speaking about the announcement, Bishop Jill said:

"Philip North is a prophetic leader and a tender-hearted pastor who loves Jesus and loves the people of Lancashire.

"I have found much joy in serving alongside Philip as a fellow suffragan bishop for the last five years. He has inspired me, encouraged and greatly supported me. And I believe that Philip is called for such a time as this to lead the Diocese of Blackburn, cherishing the diversity of opinion, theology and background that our county has always welcomed. He loves to see others flourish and find their voice – especially young people and those on the margins.

"I am delighted and relieved that he will succeed Bishop Julian as the tenth Bishop of Blackburn. May he serve our county with great joy."

The Most Revd and Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell, Archbishop of York, said:

"Bishop Philip comes to this new role already knowing and loving the diocese of Blackburn. He respects and understands the diversity of the diocese and is committed to growing a church where all can flourish both ordained and lay alike. As an evangelist, he will also strive to share the Christian faith with others. As a friend of the poor, he will be a voice for the most hard pressed and excluded in our society. I am hugely excited about his appointment and ensure him and the diocese of Blackburn of my support and prayer."

Philip was educated at the University of York and trained for ministry at St Stephen's House, Oxford. He served his title at St Mary the Virgin in the Diocese of Durham and was ordained priest in 1993. In 1996 Philip took up the role of Vicar at Holy Trinity and St Mark's Hartlepool and was also appointed Area Dean of Hartlepool in 2000.

In 2002 Philip was appointed Priest Administrator of the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham, in the Diocese of Norwich, before being appointed in 2008. Philip took up his current role as Bishop of Burnley in 2015.



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