



A priest who has broad experience of both chaplaincy and teaching, as well as in the ministering and leading of others to help God's church to grow, has been chosen as the next Suffragan Bishop of Burnley.

Edinburgh-born Rev. Dr Joseph Kennedy, 55, is currently Vicar of Oxton St Saviour in the Diocese of Chester.

He was educated at Edinburgh University (Mathematics and Theology) and then Oxford University where he trained for ordination; later beginning his ministry in Oxford Diocese.

The Bishop-designate is married to Emily who is Head of External Financial Reporting for Oxfam and they have two children: David, 13 and Mary, 7.

The Rt Revd Philip North, Bishop of Blackburn, made the appointment following consultation with a representative group of people from the Diocese.

It was approved by His Majesty The King and posted to the Downing Street website at 10am today.

Joe succeeds Bishop Philip himself, who was his immediate predecessor as Bishop of Burnley.

The date of Joe's Consecration Service later this year at York Minster will be Friday, July 19 at 11am. This will be followed by his 'Installation Service' on Sunday, September 8 at 4pm in the presence of civic, faith and community leaders from across Lancashire at our Cathedral in Blackburn.

The new Bishop of Burnley-designate was introduced today by Bishop Philip at Burnley Faith Centre.

Joining them were fellow episcopal colleague, the Rt Revd Dr Jill Duff, the Suffragan Bishop of Lancaster; all members of Bishop Philip's Vision and Strategy Team; invited civic, faith and community leaders and choir members from St Peter's CofE Primary School.

Bishop Philip said: "I am delighted to welcome the Revd Dr Joe Kennedy as our next Bishop of Burnley. He has overseen a period of significant congregational growth in his current Parish and loves to see lives changed by the Gospel.

"The advisory panel that met to interview candidates for the post was an extremely diverse one in which all traditions were well represented. The unity of mind that this group reached was extraordinary and it was incredibly beautiful to discern together a deep sense that Joe was the one whom God was calling.

"Joe brings experience and expertise in parish renewal and in starting new local congregations which will feed into his role in leading across the Diocese and overseeing the 'Being Witnesses' portfolio – part of our Vision 2026 work. Joe also has experience of theological education.

Bishop Philip continued: “At interview it was the integrity of his faith that struck us all and he will bring to the diocese a profound and life-changing trust in Jesus Christ; a sincere commitment to mutual flourishing and huge gifts in preaching and teaching.

“Please now be praying for Joe and his family as they prepare for this huge upheaval in their lives.”

Meanwhile, in his first remarks, the Revd Dr Joe Kennedy said: “I am delighted and humbled to be announced today as the next Bishop of Burnley, and to be joining Bishop Philip’s team later in the year. My family are thrilled to be coming here to Lancashire and to the Diocese of Blackburn.

“As I look to the future, my hope is to offer you a ministry which is confident in God, rooted in prayer, focused on pastoral care and on mission; and which offers a focus for unity across the diocese.

“Across Lancashire, and across the Diocese, there is such a rich variety of experience: urban and rural areas and their parishes, post-industrial towns and coastal regions, schools and chaplaincies, coupled with the diversity of traditions in the Church of England – different ways of worshipping, of serving communities, and of seeing things.

“My heart sings too as I anticipate the opportunity to begin to work with colleagues across the whole diocese as we continue to implement Vision 2026 together and look to the future – supporting healthy churches, transforming communities.”

In his new role, Joe will have particular responsibility for the ‘Being Witnesses’ strand of the Vision 2026 work. In this context he continued: “In so many communities across Lancashire, we can see Christians sharing the Gospel with confidence and enabling human flourishing through social action.

“And it’s so encouraging to see also, as part of this, new ventures in urban areas; in strategic church plants and in hundreds of new local congregations; and so much good work too in caring for God’s creation, and in parish renewal.

“These are transformational tasks ... they are all about coming to Christ and bringing others to Christ. It is in Christ’s company, in sharing his life, that we shall find light and life.”

Read the full text of both Bishop Philip's introduction and Joe's response here on our website.

Later this morning, Joe will travel to the region’s Anglican Cathedral in Blackburn where he will be welcomed by the Dean of Blackburn, The Very Revd Peter Howell-Jones and members of the Cathedral Chapter. Also in attendance at the Cathedral will be staff from the Diocesan Offices, which is located on the edge of Blackburn.

Joe will be introduced to parishes and schools across Lancashire via a livestreamed interview conducted by Bishop Philip and Bishop Jill and all available here [via the Cathedral's YouTube channel](#) with formal proceedings beginning at 11.45am.

Meanwhile, this afternoon, Joe will visit an Forest Church at Balderstone St Leonard's CofE Primary school, accompanied by our Being Witnesses Manager, Joy Rushton.

Greeting the news today, The Most Revd and Right Hon. Stephen Cottrell, Archbishop of York, said: "I am delighted that HM The King has appointed The Revd Dr Joseph Kennedy as the Suffragan Bishop of Burnley.

"Joe joins the Diocese of Blackburn at an exciting time and brings expertise in chaplaincy and teaching, and in ministering alongside others to help God's Church to grow. I very much look forward to Joe's consecration and his ministry with us in the north."

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