

The Benefice of Middleton and Thornham

The benefice of Middleton and Thornham comprises the parishes of St Leonard, Middleton and St John the Evangelist, Thornham with Gravel Hole, under the patronage of the Rt. Reverend David Walker, Bishop of Manchester. It is under the day-to-day care of the Bishop of Middleton, Rt. Reverend Mark Davies. The Benefice is in the Archdeaconry of Rochdale under the Venerable Cherry Vann and part of the Deanery of Heywood and Middleton whose Area Dean is Reverend Sister Frances Guite.

In order to give a more accurate representation of each parish, two separate Parish Profiles have been prepared as we are two very active and lively churches. Since the formation of the benefice there has been some collaboration between the two parishes - we are moving in the same direction but there is scope to enhance this further in the future.

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A. St Leonard Middleton Parish Profile 2018



1. Basic Information and Statistics (www.middletonparishchurch.org)

The Parish Church of St. Leonard, Middleton, is the oldest church in the Diocese of Manchester; BBC Radio Manchester declared it to be the oldest living building in Greater Manchester. It is a Grade 1 listed building, having stones dating from 1100; the main part dates from 1412, with further building in 1524 and the addition of an extra choir vestry in 1958. The seating capacity is approximately 240, with space for additional chairs as required.

This church has historically been a forerunner in education in England, boasting a Grade 2* listed grammar school dating from 1572. This is the Queen Elizabeth School which also belongs to the church. Jubilee, an event management company, rent the building and use it for wedding receptions and other events. The church has use of it when required liaising with Jubilee over bookings.

We would hope that the new incumbent appreciates and understands the financial challenges of having to maintain Grade 1 and Grade 2* listed buildings.

There are no other Anglican churches or licensed places of worship within the parish.

According to the census in 2011, the population of Middleton was 41,771, whilst that of the parish of Middleton was 13,600. At the end of April 2018, our electoral roll number was 171, 73 of whom lived within the parish and 98 outside it.

The number of communicants varies as follows:

- First Sunday 11:00 a.m. Communion 50-60
- Second Sunday 9:30 a.m. Contact Communion 70-80
- Third Sunday 9:30 a.m. BCP Communion 15-25
- Fourth Sunday 11:00 a.m. Communion 50-60

As will be understood later, on the first, second and fourth Sundays, other services take place which are not Eucharistic.

In the last twelve months, there have been 27 baptisms and 1 adult and 4 young people have been confirmed. There have been 13 wedding ceremonies conducted. In total, 36 funerals have been conducted, 20 of which were in church.

Christmas Communicants 2017

These were as follows:

- Midnight Communion 60
 - Christmas Morning Communion 90
- 150 Total

In addition, there were many non-sacramental services which should not be ignored: Christingle Service, Nativity and Toy Service, Middleton Uniformed Groups Carol Service, the Service of Nine Lessons and Carols and various schools' services throughout the year. Attendance in total was 1600 persons!

Easter and Holy Week Communicants 2018

These were as follows:

- Palm Sunday 9:30 a.m. 63
 - Maundy Thursday 40
 - Easter Sunday (2 services) 160
- 263 Total

In addition there were other significant non-sacramental services:

- Palm Service 11:00 a.m.
- Wednesday in Holy Week
- Good Friday Services - Morning Prayer
Hour at the Cross
Compline
- Remembrance Day Services 9:30 a.m. and 10:45a.m.

There were also services for Middleton Parish Primary School and St Anne's Academy.

The total attendance at all of these services combined was 1081.

The Benefice Office is situated within St Leonard's Church and staffed Monday to Thursday 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. We employ a part-time administrator who undertakes a variety of tasks for both churches.

The Benefice Magazine is compiled from items from both churches, and always includes a message from the Rector. It is produced bi-monthly by a team of three members of the church, who print and collate 150 copies for each edition in the Benefice Office. Six people hand deliver 48 copies and 8 are posted out. The remainder are sold in church at the price of 50p. St John's take delivery of 20 copies.

The **Church Wardens** are:

David Brennan 3 Rosethorns Close, Middleton,
Manchester M24 6TP
Tel: 0161 653 4526 Mob: 07763 973635

Christine Swailes West Lea, 161 Manchester Old Road, Middleton,
Manchester M24 4DZ
Tel: 0161 643 2394

4. Local Community

The town of Middleton is situated on the boundary with Manchester, and also abuts Rochdale and Oldham. Historically, all of these were largely working class towns where the main form of employment was in the mills or local factories. With the demise of the vast majority of these sources of employment, most people began to commute into Manchester or the surrounding towns in order to work.

In the 1950s, large estates of social housing were built in Middleton to provide overspill for Manchester Council, and these have impacted significantly on the general character of the town as a whole.

The parish itself is situated at the heart of Middleton, and its population is estimated at circa 13,600, most of whom are white British and would belong to the poorer socio-economic groups. In the past, there has been very little ethnic diversity, but this is beginning to change, with 9% of the population now non-white British.

It is best described as being a diverse parish, with the most deprived area ranked 1,277 on the national deprivation index and least deprived area ranked 20,887 out of a possible ranking of 32,482. The majority of the parish population falls within the top 30% of multiple deprivations.

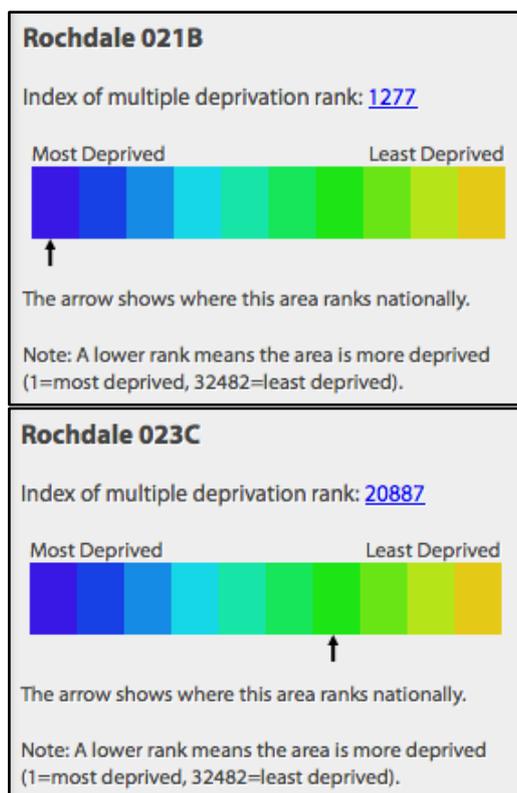
There are a large percentage of private houses within the parish, but 23% of households still live in social housing. 13% of the population are aged 65 or over, and pensioner poverty runs at 27%. 32% of working age adults have no qualifications, and 16% of working age adults receive key out-of-work benefits. 32% of all families are single parent families, and child poverty runs at 27%. Life expectancy for men is 12 years less than men in prosperous parishes, and for women it is 21 years less.

We trust the incumbent would also fulfil the civic responsibilities and uphold the responsibilities of the position of Rector of Middleton. As the Rector of the ancient and the original parish of the whole town, there is a public role; this includes the Annual Remembrance Day Parade, which the Rector leads, and at which they must give an address. The Rector has contact with councillors and members of Parliament, occasionally attending special events. There is also a need to attend the Township, Culture, Leisure and Tourism Group and generally “be around” and “keep in touch”.

5. Schools, Institutions and Voluntary Groups

Schools

Middleton Parish Church School is a large two-form entry C of E Aided Primary school with a nursery, and is supported, encouraged and nurtured by the parish. Historical documents testify to there being a school within the parish from the 13th century. The ordained staff of St.



Source: © 2012 Crown Copyright.

<http://opendatacommunities.org/deprivation/map>

Leonard, Middleton, have continued to maintain links, often in a teaching capacity, from that time.

As an ex-officio governor of the school, his/her presence in school is valued, especially during Ofsted and SIAMS inspection visits, assemblies and class time, and as a spiritual guide. The new incumbent would be expected to continue to take an active lead. One of the curates and members of both the PCC and the congregation are currently governors of the school, whilst the church Treasurer, who is also a governor, liaises with school to offer help and support on financial matters. A group of "Prayer Buddies" from our congregation also liaise with Y5 and Y6.

The children visit church at least once a term for their own services, and also join in services and events organized by church e.g. Christingle and "Experience Easter". Local history is taught to class groups, both in church and within school, with the help of local historians within the congregation.

The Bishop of Middleton says that the school, "Oozes its ethos in bucketsful!"

St. Anne's Academy (formerly named The Queen Elizabeth School)

Middleton Parish Church has traditionally had a strong relationship with this school. In the 16th century, a former pupil of a school in Middleton – Alexander Nowell, Dean of St. Paul's in London – encouraged the foundation of a grammar school in Middleton by obtaining a grant from Queen Elizabeth I. Often, the school master was a curate at Middleton Parish Church. Thus, Church and School were closely linked, and Founder's Day Services have been a natural part of our local pattern.

The Rector has previously served on the board of governors, and participated in worship and other aspects of RE within the school. Good links have been established with staff and pupils, some of whom have previously attended our church primary school. The OLM Curate supports the school for special services at Easter and Christmas as well as occasional school-based collective worship including communion.

The Queen Elizabeth Foundation still exists, providing discretionary grants to help students from the parish. It is imperative that these links should be maintained, nurtured and strengthened.

We maintain links with **Boarshaw Community Primary School** with regular assemblies for Christmas and Easter festivals. Curates work with staff and children when requested to do so, and classes of children also visit church for various curricular studies.

We would hope that an incumbent would acknowledge and encourage the links with these schools and work to further them.

We are continuing to build links with Hollin Community Primary School and the co-located Newlands School (a school for children with special needs) but have no links with St. John Fisher RC Primary School, Cardinal Langley RC High School or Hopwood Hall College.

Institutions and Voluntary Groups

Clergy and parishioners undertake regular pastoral visits to the housebound, those in hospital or to family carers. Holy Communion is taken out by the clergy and those licensed to assist at communion. Hulton Care Nursing Home is situated opposite church, and regular pastoral visits are made to encourage and nurture staff members and residents. One of the annual highlights

is the Christmas visit by the church choir, at which carols are sung and communion offered. In the Benefice there are two other Residential Care Homes namely Briarmede and Hopwood Lodge both of which are located in the St John's parish, but with agreement visits can be made by us especially if a resident was a St. Leonard's parishioner.

We support the Brentwood Day Centre; this is a venture serving the community for those in need to which parishioners contribute on a weekly basis. A significant proportion of our Harvest Celebration Food was donated to Brentwood and the Booth Centre. During the winter months gifts of warm clothing are donated to Brentwood. Our Toy Service enabled us to contribute to families in need through the Salvation Army who distribute them within the Rochdale area.

We have links with Kids Praise Theatre Workshop a voluntary Christian drama and dance group that has celebrated its 25th anniversary in 2018. They run weekly rehearsal and drama sessions on Friday evenings at Alkington & Providence URC for children aged 4-18 to put on an entertaining and at the same time Gospel-rich performance by taking well-known stories and transforming them into an accessible good news message. Recent productions have included "I Believe" and "The Doctor and the Lord of Time". Many young people from across the benefice are actively involved.

Along the very busy roads, which dissect the parish, are all kinds of shops and businesses, and as of the last pastoral reorganisation the main shopping area lies just inside the parish boundary. Along with the other members of the 'Church Together' group, ministers at St Leonard's are involved in the town centre chaplaincy. The parish also contains the Middleton Conservation Area in which the church buildings reside.

6. Worship and Worshippers

The monthly pattern is as follows:

Wk 1	9:30 a.m.	Contact Service
	11:00 a.m.	Holy Communion (Common Worship)
Wk 2	9:30 a.m.	Contact Service with Holy Communion (CW)
	11:00 a.m.	Morning Prayer (Service of the Word, elements of liturgy from CW and BCP)
Wk 3	9:30 a.m.	Holy Communion (BCP)
	10:45 a.m.	Family Parade Service (Service of the Word)
Wk 4+5	9:30 a.m.	Contact Service
	11:00 a.m.	Holy Communion (CW)

We have two other evening services in the year when people who are recently bereaved can remember their loved ones.

Usual clergy dress is cassock and surplice (choir dress) with scarf or stole as appropriate.

The Contact Service is informal, whilst following Service of the Word liturgy from Common Worship, and young families with children tend to favour this service. A team of leaders organize the children's groups on three out of four Sundays each month, following a scriptural study plan. The groups are divided by school year grouping: a crèche (0-3 year olds); immediate pre-school, reception and Y1 (3-6 year olds); Y2, Y3 and Y4 (6-9 year olds); Y5 and

Y6 (9-11 year olds) and Y7+ (secondary school age, 11–teens). During the group time, the adults have a talk from the minister. There are existing plans in place to alter the format of the Contact Service to an all-in service on the first Sunday of the month with no groups and a theme set which will be looked at in more depth in the subsequent Wk 2 and Wk 4+5 group times and potentially at the Family Parade Service. The current plans mean this will be implemented at the start of 2019.

Baptism families are asked to attend the Contact Service for two months leading up to the Baptism. There is also a half-hour preparation session for parents and godparents on the Sunday preceding the service. Demand is such that a separate Baptism Service is held on the fourth Sunday of the month at 12:45 p.m. There are often four or five families present and there can be 150 – 200 people in church. In recent years, to cope with the high demand, we have also held baptisms on the subsequent Sunday (either 5th Sunday or 1st Sunday of the subsequent month).

The members of the congregation who are of more mature years usually prefer to attend the 11:00 a.m. service.

There are more women than men in the congregation, and more people in the lower socio-economic groups than in the higher ones.

One of the strengths of the church is that there is a very broad range of styles of worship, ranging from Messy Church to the Liturgy of the Book of Common Prayer and Compline. We would describe it as Centrally Evangelical with emphasis on the ministry of the Holy Spirit whilst remembering our catholic roots.

7. Church-Based Organizations and Groups

During a “Put Yourself in the Picture” venture, we realized how vast were the number of church-based teams, organizations and groups. Our church family functions on teams, therefore teamwork via personal skills and abilities is essential.

The church uniform groups of Rainbows, Beavers, Brownies, Cubs and Guides meet weekly at the Parish Church School. The Boarshaw and St John's Cubs meet together at Smalley Hall, Slattocks. The scouts and explorers use the Old Grammar School and a scout building at the rear of Alkington and Providence United Reform Church. All the groups are very popular with several oversubscribed.

A fellowship lunch takes place each month. This grew from a mid-week communion service mainly attended by retired people who needed contact with each other, and developed into a simple lunch and a sharing of bread and wine. It then found a true purpose by linking with years 5 and 6 at the Parish School as “Prayer Buddies”. Fellowship members now go to school at least termly, to share both fun and prayers with those classes for whom they have constantly prayed.

Home groups meet at different times and days of the week and encourage all comers. Each group follow the same study material albeit at the individual pace of that group. Historically the Rector suggests the topic to follow. Currently home groups are following The Pilgrim Course books.

Under the leadership of the Ministry Team each year an Alpha course or similar Christian beginners' course is offered for anyone who wishes to attend either as a refresher course or specifically with Confirmation in mind. In addition Lent and Advent courses are held usually spanning 5/6 weekly sessions. The 2018 Lent course was entitled The Long Road to Heaven based on the Way of St James to Santiago de Compostela, the Advent Course currently running is entitled "Someone to Believe In" based on the film Miracle on 34th Street.

Church services are enhanced by a music group, a choir, a real organ and an organist – each playing a part as appropriate. We also have a full peal of bells which are over three hundred years old. Singers, players and ringers have regular practices and work hard – as do all the members of our teams.

All our groups, Contact Service leaders (without whom the Contact Service would not happen), flower arrangers, cleaners, sidespersons, refreshment servers, lay assistants, the Evangelism and Mission Team, Prayer and Healing Team, and all other groups already mentioned are supported by a praying church.

The fabric of the building (and of the Queen Elizabeth School) is under the guidance of a team who appreciate the contributions from the Friends of Middleton Parish Church Society in helping to fund the maintenance of the fabric.

In summer 2018 the long awaited news arrived from the HLF advising the building team that almost £250k had been granted and that our proposals could begin. Contractors arrived on site in late October and will be working until spring 2019. Funding has also been secured from Viridor of £50k (less our contribution of £5k) and £10k from Wolfson. The funding will address repairs urgently needed on external walls on the west and south elevations requiring the scraping out of the old pointing and repointing with lime mortar which is essential to preserve the stonework.

- The tower will also be repointed and the wooden weather boards re-nailed as necessary and painted. Weathercock compass points will be repaired and gilded.
- Clerestories on the south elevation will be repaired and lime mortar used to re point where necessary.
- Loose and vandalised merlons will be reset.

Funds have also just been released from the Friends of Middleton Parish Church of £70k and this has funded the installation of two new gas central heating boilers costing £21k, repointing of the ledger stones around church costing £8k and a grass treatment programme. The gates to the south church yard are to be replaced following the design copied from archive photographs. When the weather is too cold to continue with external pointing, work will begin on the reconfiguration of the north entrance to provide accessible toilet facilities for the disabled

Work is almost completed on a history book focusing on the church stained glass which HLF will pay for. Funding will also pay for a new projector, laptop and some display material. Our architects are Buttress of Manchester and their fees will be met from the grant funding. This work is phase 1 and much more funding is needed to complete all urgent repairs.

Lots of hard work goes into promoting our social life; meals out, excursions, visits, quizzes etc. take place regularly, and the Church Women's Guild play their part in this too, with periodic talks

from invited speakers and events including a luncheon for members and guests twice a year which promotes inclusion and maintains contact with members.

The time between the completion of the 9:30 a.m. service and the start of the 11:00 a.m. service and the time immediately after the 11.00 a.m. service is used as a valuable opportunity for socializing, fellowship, discussing the content of the service and having refreshments.

8. Neighbouring Anglican Churches and Parishes

We work collaboratively with all other parishes in the town. As a benefice, there are some areas, already indicated, where we share expertise, and we have also held joint PCC days.

Our representatives participate in the Deanery Synods which follow a formal calendar and agenda. We are part of the Middleton Churches cluster into which we have recently welcomed St Martin's of Castleton, a similar arrangement exists for the churches in Heywood promoting a sharing of resources rather than each church working alone in isolation. Discussions relating to best practise, Diocesan information and initiatives, training courses, ministry number/vacancies, sharing experiences, future planning etc. all assist to bind us together.

With the parishes in the town, we share services such as Ascension Day, Maundy Thursday and joint Confirmation Services. Clergy within the town support one another with funerals and weddings when necessary.

Due to the historical nature of the position as Rector of Middleton, this post is the patron of many neighbouring and distant parishes.

9. Ecumenism

Within the parish of Middleton, there are two other Christian churches with whom we have good contact, namely Long Street Methodist Church and St. Stephen's Church - which belongs to the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion. Looking at the wider picture within the town, we have good contact with Alkrington and Providence United Reformed Church. Links also exist with Mills Hill Baptist Church; informal links are maintained with all of these churches, as well as tenuous links with the Roman Catholic churches of St. Peter and St. Thomas More. A ministers' group now meets about every 4 or 5 weeks.

During the summer, the churches often have joint evening services, and together with other churches we support the Middleton Food Bank, Brentwood Day Centre and Burnside Centre. We are part of Churches Together, but this is not a formally constituted organization.

10. Ministry

There is a growing ministry team at Middleton Parish Church. All ordained ministers and officers are licenced to the benefice but those listed here predominantly work at St Leonard's.

- **Revd Jason Powell**, Stipendiary Curate. Currently the lead on the inclusion of those with hidden disabilities. Together with local ecumenical partners and Greater Manchester Industrial Mission, Jason heads up a Town Centre Chaplaincy in Middleton Market. Across the benefice, Jason works in both schools (St John's and Middleton Parish) providing collective worship, meditations, drop-ins and seasonal services as well as being an active governor for Parish School. Connected to this children's work is the development and support of a new youth group beginning at St John's Church. 
- **Revd Freda Jackson**, OLM PTO Assistant Curate. Leads a team ministering to the housebound and those in residential homes, whilst also having oversight both of those assisting at communion and of the work done in the children's groups during the Contact Service. Within church, she liaises closely with the choir and the organist. Within the parish, she connects with school the "Prayer Buddies" and local history. 
- **Revd David Brooks**, OLM Assistant Curate. Within church, he liaises closely with the music group, contact group leaders and uniformed organisations and coordinates the annual wedding preparation session covering practical matters for couples. Within the benefice, he connects with several schools and works directly with Kids Praise Theatre Workshop. He sits on Deanery Standing Committee, is a clergy representative on Diocesan Synod and current vice-chair of Governors at Bury Church of England High School. 
- **Revd Karen Hamnett**, OLM Assistant Curate. NHS Healthcare Chaplain for Pennine Acute Trust (Part time) working in a multi-faith chaplaincy team. Pastoral ministry within the parish context, but which through her chaplaincy role extends beyond the benefice into the wider community. Her focus is on nurturing adults in their faith through Christian beginner courses (e.g. Alpha), and other courses (e.g. Lent and Advent courses/bible study). 
- **Diane Taylor-Harrison**, Reader. Leads and coordinates on children's work within the church including Messy Church and the Child Friendly Church Award. Appointed ex-officio governor at Middleton Parish Primary School in lieu of the Rector and she is keen to forge stronger links between church and school. 

The church has been accredited as a child-friendly church and we are working on being reaccredited after allowing this to lapse. We have a team of 3 safeguarding officers and continue to roll out a programme of safeguarding training, beginning with Contact Service group leaders and all members of the PCC.

The whole congregation is encouraged to explore ministry of all kinds. We ARE the church, and everyone has a role in the body of Christ – none too small! The gospels record that Jesus chose all different types of people for His team – and He is still doing that!

David Brennan, a church warden, also acts as Verger for the church.

11. Mission

Our Mission Statement is, "To know God in Jesus Christ and to make Him known", and our aim is to bring people to love and serve the Lord and to widen His Kingdom:

Through prayer...

- We encourage the present congregation to think of themselves as disciples and to display their faith in their everyday lives, acting as an example to others.
- We offer a warm, welcoming and inclusive environment in church.
- We encourage and invite people in the parish to come through the church doors feeling safe and comfortable.
- We encourage the people of our town by working with the local charitable agencies.
- We encourage young people to have an experience of the Christian faith by attending events such as the Christingle Service or the Experience Easter, Harvest or Pentecost events.
- We encourage people to change.

Also...

- Through prayer and financial support, we encourage Christians in other countries, such as our links with Uganda.
- Through the distribution of St. Luke's gospel to children who attend events.
- We constantly review our Mission Statement and ourselves at PCC meetings.

Our mission priorities for the next two years are as stated in our Mission Statement, and to take on board that with God, all things are possible. We also need to make sure that we have acted upon all the information from the "Talents" survey done as part of the stewardship project, "Put Yourself in the Picture". We must continue with the work we are already doing: organizing events, displays for specific anniversaries, including work by the children of the Parish School, aiming to increase Christian knowledge, and increasing our efforts to reach more people in our Parish.

12. Finance and Stewardship

The PCC carries out constant self-appraisal with the help of the Diocesan advisers.

In 2016 the church negotiated with the DBF by setting a jointly agreed amount as the parish share contribution. The current agreement started in 2017 with the church contributing £40,000 in year one, increase by £5,000 per annum over 3 years. This was in acknowledgement of the cost of upkeep for maintaining a Grade 1 listed building and struggling to meet the full commitment in previous years. (In 2015 our Parish Share was calculated at £92,591, of which we were only able to contribute 50%). Where the PCC are able to make a contribution above the minimum agreed amount, the PCC will undertake to do so.

All expenses relating to the incumbent and other officers are met in full.

We offer financial support to a wide range of U.K. charities/appeals over the past year. We have raised £1,140 for distribution to these charities. We also continue to support our two mission fields in Uganda (which we have done so since 2006). Via CUCMUK £100 per month is donated plus additional monies raised from specific initiatives raising a total of £2,125.

On the first Sunday of each month, an additional collection is made, offering additional financial support to charities and good causes both at home and abroad.

The support of the Friends of Middleton Parish Church Society has been invaluable in respect of helping to finance repairs and maintenance expenditure on our Grade 1 listed building. Should legacies to the Friends discontinue, we would no longer have this source of support.

Our Challenges at St Leonard's

St. Leonard's is a welcoming church which offers a wide range of styles of worship, seeks to nurture and develop its congregation spiritually, involve them in the life of the church and develop their talents. But there are challenges which we face in the future, such as:

- Further developing a vision for the future of the joint benefice for the whole congregation;
- Increasing our outreach into the community;
- Retaining families who come to church for marriages, baptisms etc.
- Increasing our congregation still further;
- Increasing our annual giving;
- Encouraging more people to volunteer for leadership roles;

B. St. John the Evangelist, Thornham with Gravel Hole Parish Profile 2018



Introduction

A small mission church was first established in Thornham in 1841 at the suggestion of Reverend Richard Durnford, Rector of St Leonard's Middleton, to serve the growing population of the area. Services at 'Thornham Mission', which was also a day school, were conducted by curates travelling from Middleton. The parish of Thornham with Gravel Hole was subsequently established in 1896 and shortly after R. B. Preston was appointed to design our present building which is regarded as one of his finest. St John the Evangelist was consecrated in 1907 and has sought to maintain a missional outlook serving the people of the parish and beyond - <http://www.stjohnthornham.org>

The building became Grade II listed in 2004 and we became a united benefice with St Leonard, Middleton in 2011.

In recent years substantial renovation work has been carried out on the roof; in 2018 stonework and stained-glass windows were restored and a disabled access ramp was installed. Internal improvements have been made over the last few years and the church building is otherwise in a good state of repair and is well maintained. In the next few years we would like to provide improved kitchen and toilet facilities subject to finances.

We have a seating capacity of 250. St. John's is a particularly attractive church set amidst farm fields within a distinctive parish and community. We are a relatively small parish numerically (1970), but despite our size we are well attended, with a wide array of gifts and skills, and a significant presence in the community.

We are told we are a friendly and welcoming community and we hope we offer a place where people can 'belong before they believe'. There are no other licensed places of worship in the parish.

We aim to demonstrate God’s grace and faithfulness throughout the generations and our desire is to continue to grow, to impact our community with Kingdom values and to play our part in the benefice and wider Diocese of Manchester.

1. Our Parish

The parish of St John’s is semi-rural and is boundaried to the east by Tandle Hill Country Park and to the west by the Rochdale Canal, making this a popular area for walkers. The church, with its graveyard, is situated among open farmland off Thornham Lane and is a well-loved landmark in the locality, with many walkers and other visitors taking the opportunity to ‘rest awhile’ in the peaceful surroundings.

Also along Thornham Lane are the Smalley Memorial Hall and St. John’s C of E Primary School. The open aspects to the east of the parish comprise several working farms and the approach to Tandle Hill Country Park.

The population of 1,970 is fairly static. Housing is residential to either side of the main Rochdale to Manchester Road with the largest estate being in the Chesham Avenue area.

Housing consists mainly of terraced and semidetached properties with a smaller number of detached houses, flats and apartments. 75% of houses are owner occupied and 25% rented.

One fifth of households do not own a car, whilst 17% of households with children are lone parents.

Most people of working age are in full or part time employment with only 5% unemployed (with youth unemployment, fortunately, very low). The population of the parish as a whole demonstrates a mix of retired and middle-aged people and young families, including both professional and manual workers, as well as some unemployed.

Parish Demographics (2014)

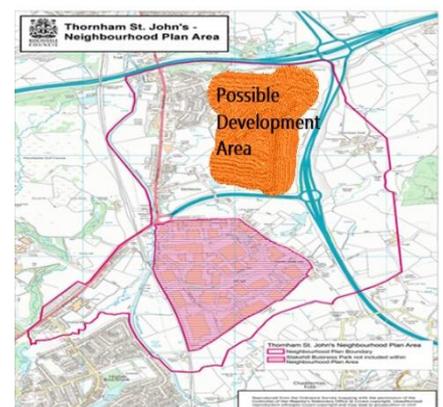
<u>Age of population</u>		<u>Partnership Profile</u>		<u>Social Diversity</u>		<u>Religion</u>	
Under 16	19%	Single	34%	White	92%	Christian	70%
16-29	17%	Married	47%	Other	8%	Muslim	4%
30-59	40%	Divorced	10%			None	19%
60-74	17%	Widowed/Other	9%			Not stated	7%
75+	7%						

Information from Manchester Diocesan Offices

Future Developments in the area

Currently Rochdale Council are consulting widely on future housing requirements in the borough as part of the Greater Manchester Spatial Plan, and the Thornham Neighbourhood Forum Group have been requested to comment on the outline proposals. This is at an early stage and there is widespread local opposition to the proposals; however, Rochdale Council are committed to the development.

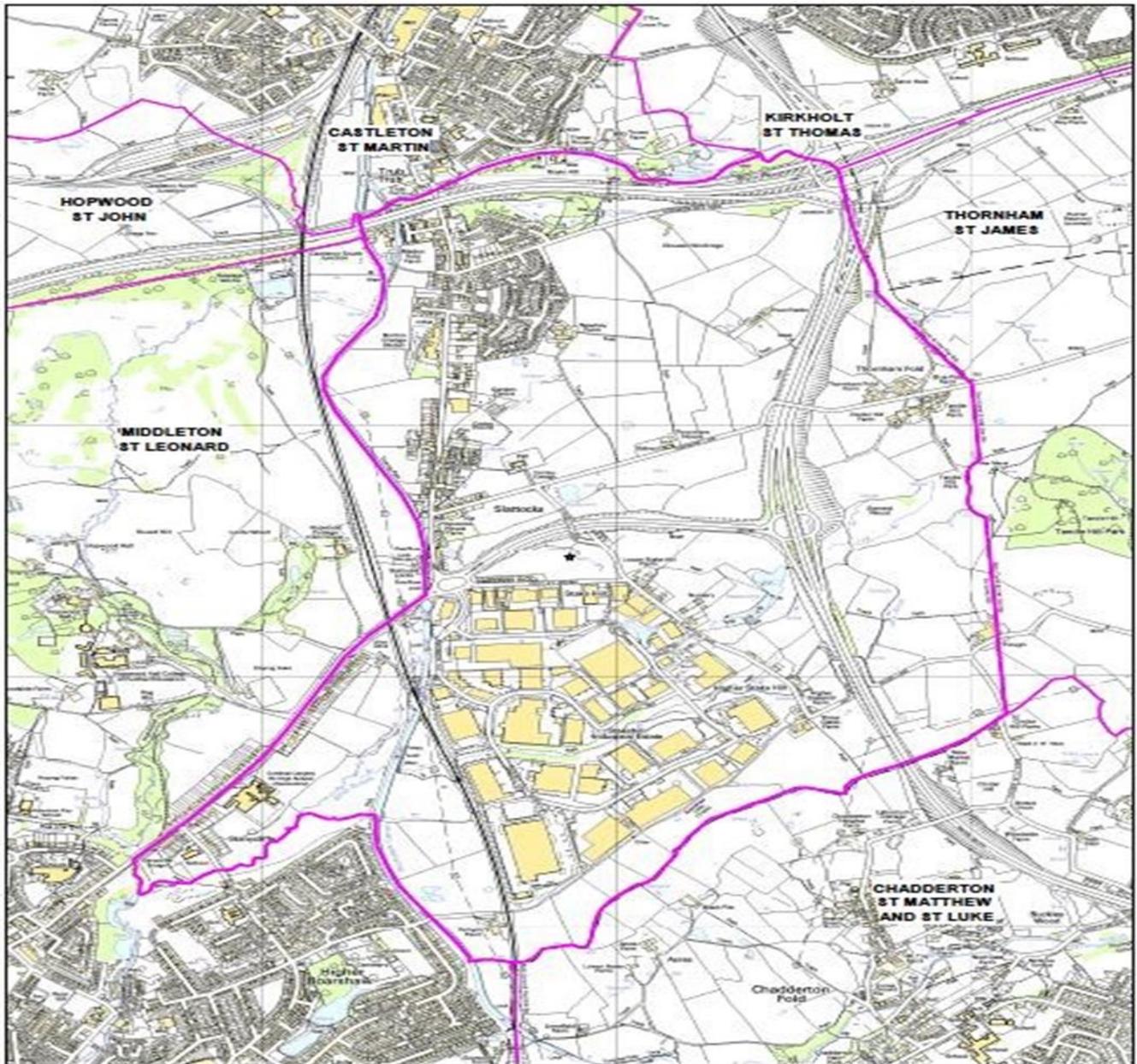
Two members of St Johns currently attend Forum meetings and keep the PCC updated on matters. It is possible that within a five-



year period, a development of between 500 and 5000 detached and semidetached properties will be built around or close to St Johns Church and School.

This will significantly change the demographics of the area, requiring improvements to infrastructure, and will present St. John's with further outreach opportunities.

Parish Boundary Map



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2. Schools, businesses and other amenities

St John's CE Aided Primary School is located in the original Mission Church building (situated further up Thornham Lane from the existing church building) and was founded by the Rector of Middleton in the 1840s.

The school currently has a roll of 94 pupils and enjoys close links and a very good relationship with the church. These links have grown steadily over recent years and are now evidenced in various ways, such as: frequent clergy visits to school to lead collective worship and provide other spiritual input; school services in church (Harvest, Christmas, Easter, End-of-Year); School Sunday services, when the whole school community is invited to Sunday morning worship (September Welcome, Christingle, Fathers' Day); other lay support and involvement; a full complement of Foundation Governors drawn from the congregation sitting on the Governing Body.



St John's Church greatly values its close links with the school and is seeking to continue to strengthen them, this is consequently an important part of our Mission Action Plan. Many of the young families in church have children attending the school.

The school has an Ofsted report of good (September 2017)

Cardinal Langley RC High School is situated within the parish but there has been no contact or

relationship between St John's Church and the school, except in so far as some pupils of the school may live within the parish.

Thornham Cricket Club was founded in the same era as the church. There are no formal links but a few people are members of both the church and the cricket club. The same comment would also apply to Manchester Golf Club and to Chesham Bowling Club.

Within the parish there are three pubs, one hotel, a B&B, some hostel accommodation, two nursing homes, two garden centres and a number of working farms. There is also a petrol filling station with a mini-market.

Stakehill Industrial Estate covers a large area of the parish and mainly comprises warehousing facilities, but few contacts currently exist with the church.

3. Worship and worshippers

Although in the broad spectrum that makes up Anglican worship, we would class our tradition as 'evangelical'. At St. John's we value a balance in our worship which has, as essential elements, both sacramental/liturgical services alongside more informal worship. Our main Sunday morning worship is distinctively Anglican in its liturgy, yet has a relaxed, informal approach that encourages worshippers to feel at ease, and allows room for the Holy Spirit to minister to us as we seek to be open to all that God has for us.

4. Music Ministry

We have two organists who cover various services and seven members make up our Music Group, singing and playing a variety of instruments including piano, guitars, flute and drums.



Music is a very important part of all our services and we are blessed with many people who are musically gifted; our worship is enhanced by the diversity they bring.



5. Prayer and Healing

Recognising that prayer is of primary importance five years ago we began Saturday Morning Prayer with the expressed purpose of praying for the life and mission of the church and to intercede for those in need. Additionally, we hold prayers on the last Saturday of the month at the nearby All-in-One Garden Centre.

A group of 6 people, on a rota basis, offer prayer and anointing in the power of the Holy Spirit during services of Holy Communion. This is an area of ministry we intend to develop further, in accordance with the aims of our Mission Action Plan.

6. Pattern of Services

Week	Time	Service	Typical attendance
1st Sunday	9.15am	First Sunday (informal family oriented)	41 adults 29 children
	10.30am	Holy Communion (no formal provision for children)	28 adults
2nd Sunday	8.00am	BCP Holy Communion	4 adults
	10.30am	Holy Communion or Morning Prayer (with age related provision 0-14yrs)	59 adults 19 children
3rd Sunday	10.30am	Family Service with Uniformed Organisations (Service of the Word)	66 adults 47 children
4th Sunday	10.30am	Holy Communion or Morning Prayer (with age related provision)	57 adults 31 children (0-14yrs)
5 th Sunday	9.15am	Holy Communion (MAP new for 2019)	
	10.30am	Café Style Church (MAP New for 2019)	
Saturdays	9.00am	Morning Prayer (with extended time of intercessory prayer)	5 adults

With the exception of monthly BCP Communion, Common Worship is used throughout making good use of 'New Patterns for Worship' and 'Times and Seasons' to shape the service, reflect the seasons and support teaching themes. Eucharistic Prayer 'H' is most commonly used as it is considered more child-friendly; however, an alternative is used occasionally. Our services, for the most part, follow the Revised Common Lectionary.

All main services are facilitated by projection associated software (PowerPoint).

Ministers usually wear choir dress.

Seasonal Special Services including last year’s attendance:

Prior to Christmas and Easter, we leaflet every household in the Parish with a quality invitation with a short seasonal message and blessing and details of regular and seasonal services. Our Christmas services are particularly well attended and include Christingle (120), Easter Day (100) Nativity Service (100) and Carols by Candlelight (180) and our carol singing at a local pub is greatly enjoyed.

During Lent and Advent we offer contemplation and learning opportunities (in 2018, 17 attendees in Lent) and a special reflective service is held on Good Friday.



Regular afternoon teas/brunches for the community are offered

and act as a fund raiser, donating to UK-wide and local charities. This takes commitment by a dedicated team of volunteers and opens the church to all members of the community.

Our Harvest Parade service is well attended (110); we give thanks to God for all His goodness and encourage a giving of ourselves, our love, our time, our abilities and our wealth in response, often in the form of a ‘Gift Day’. Twice a year we celebrate School Sunday with the primary school with an average attendance of 130.



Demographics of the congregation of St John’s (2014)

<u>Age of population</u>		<u>Social Diversity</u>	<u>Adult Gender Mix</u>
Under 16	24%	White 99%	Male 26%
16-29	10%	Other 1%	Female 74%
30-59	45%		
60-74	18%		
75+	3%		

Information gathered from those who attended church over a five-week period. We also noted that 50% of the congregation of St John’s live outside the parish.

There are currently 116 people on our electoral roll however we frequently have new people, particularly young families, visit us and decide to come again finding a friendly welcome together with modern services and children’s groups appealing. The electoral role is due to be updated Jan 2019.

7. Occasional Services

Baptisms take place during Sunday morning services, and parents are usually given instruction and guidance in the weeks preceding the service.

Figures for year (2017): Baptisms 7; Confirmation 4; Weddings 4; Funerals 3; Burial of Ashes 5.

8. Children and Young People

During most services a small vestry is available with the provision of story books and toys for use by parents with babies and toddlers, including supervised craft, song and prayer activities ('Little Gems' 0-3yrs).

A former choir vestry is utilised for 'Sparks' (3-6yrs) who have a separate teaching and craft session following lectionary-based material.

Young people in our 'Connect' group (7-13yrs) have separate youth services twice a month at the Smalley Hall which offers more space and versatility and is a more appropriate venue for this age group.

Our 'First Sunday' service at 9.15am, on the first Sunday of each month, was designed to accommodate the needs of children, young parents and new Christians. It has proved to be a great success, and although it requires greater resource input in terms of planning and execution, this has brought together a group of about a dozen people who, as they meet twice a month to facilitate this, have discovered and exhibited gifts and talents previously unrecognised, and have grown in confidence as a consequence.

Attendees average 29 under 12's and 41 adults.



First Sunday

It is our practise, under the authority of the Diocesan Bishop, to admit all baptised children who are regular members of St John's to receive Holy Communion in one kind.

9. Pastoral Care

St. John's is a caring community of people who support and care for one another and offers a warm welcome to newcomers. There are strong friendship and social networks through connections with school or leisure activities, all of which afford a framework for pastoral care. However, with changing patterns of church attendance we have become aware that we need to be more intentional in our pastoral care.

10. Church Groups

Over the years we have held a number of Youth groups, but these have diminished in recent years. A team are just starting a new venture to encourage the youth of our church and community to meet regularly.

Other youth organisations include well attended uniformed organisations comprising: Rainbows, Brownies, Guides and Senior Section; and Beavers and Cubs. The groups meet at the Smalley Hall and the church funds the rental charges. These groups attend a monthly Parade service.

There are three prayer groups who meet regularly; a support group and a number of ad-hoc groups following short courses in exploring faith, nurture and discipleship. From one enquirer group 4 attendees were confirmed during 2018 and attend church regularly.

In recent years, we have offered and held Alpha groups.

We have sought to provide opportunities for the church family to come together just to socialise, for example: curry evenings, men's and ladies' evenings, trips, family walks and picnics, and 'Murder Mystery' evenings with actors from the congregation.

11. Neighbouring Anglican Churches and Ecumenism

Although we share links with neighbouring Anglican parishes, through various activities that involve parishioners from those parishes (e.g. food bank), there is limited formal collaborative work. The development of Mission Partnerships is being explored at deanery level. We do of course work together within the benefice with St Leonard's, with some occasional joint services and occasional social events, but there is scope for greater joint working here too.

Relationships between clergy in the deanery are very positive. The Chapter meets regularly, including a twice-yearly overnight conference at Whalley Abbey, where issues can be explored more deeply and concerns shared openly.

There are no other Christian churches within the parish of St. John's, although in the neighbouring parish of St Martin Castleton, there is a RC and a Methodist church. Historically there have been some links with these churches but these have lapsed in recent years.

12. Ministry

We are in a Joint Benefice with St. Leonard's, Middleton, under the leadership of the Rector. St John's is blessed with a breadth of licensed ministry, both ordained and lay. All ordained ministers are licenced to the benefice but those listed here predominantly work at St John's. The current position is:

Ordained, Licensed and Authorized Ministries:



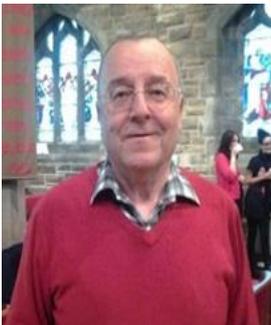
Rev Pete: Demain
Assistant Curate (OLM)



Rev Sue Spencer:
Assistant Curate (OLM)



Rev Jason Powell
Curate (2016 -2019)



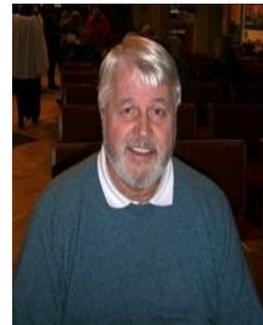
Mike Williams:
Reader Emeritus



Cheryl Almond:
ALM



Annette Demain:
ALM



Richard Petrie:
Reader Emeritus

Other Lay Ministries:

Our wardens, John Penman and Ron Law, assist and support the clergy and supervise and encourage the sides-people in their duties and are themselves actively involved in ministry in other areas of the life of St John's.

The PCC, chaired by the Rector, consists of 12 lay members plus ex-officio members. Much of the detailed work of the council is carried out by sub groups who report back to full PCC with ideas and recommendations.

Our Verger assists with administration and arrangements for weddings and funerals. We have a group of 18 people who minister as intercessors, Bible readers, and communion assistants and in offering prayer with the laying on of hands and anointing during communion.

Our children's and youth ministries are served by 15 leaders across the age groups. Other people carry out such varied ministries as: meeting & greeting, serving refreshments, cleaning, gardening, building maintenance, flower arranging, visiting, newsletter, magazine, website, finance, administration, banner making...



13. Mission

Within the overall setting of our strapline – ‘We gather together to worship God and grow, then go out and share His love’ – St John’s has now completed its ‘Mission Action Planning’ (MAP) for the next 5 years (copy attached). Agreed by the PCC and the Deanery and the Diocese of Manchester, MAP falls into three key areas: the first focusing on St Johns School; the second in Growing the Church; and the third in Serving the Community.

- 1 The focus of the church is on the whole family of God. We want to reach out with the Gospel making school a priority.
 - Parents, Staff, Pupils, extended families, Pre-school, Outdoor tots.
 - Deepening relationship through joint events, governance and worship.
- 2 Becoming a growing church which is enjoying worship, fellowship and is welcoming new people month by month. Helping people to share faith together, pray for each other, care for one another and serve the parish.
 - Grow our congregation, both in depth and number, through nurturing whole life discipleship and pastoral care.
 - An open, inclusive and accepting church.
 - Working through small groups, prayer partners, worship, fellowship, discipleship and service.
 - Stewardship.
- 3 Serving the Parish and Community by becoming more visible as Church members.
 - Events in the community joining in where we can.
 - Garden centre, afternoon teas/brunch/lunch.
 - Involvement in priority 1
 - Publicity, sharing this more widely as with school.
 - Heritage visits.
 - Web site
 - Care of the environment

Key areas are discussed at PCCs with working/sub groups reporting back progress and achievements. Priorities and action points will change based on the way God leads us.

The PCC are also keen to explore all possibilities of making our church more accessible for those with disabilities, the first phase has been in the installation of a ramp (2018) making St John’s church wheelchair accessible.

A Deanery and UK wide event was hosted by St John’s during October of 2018 for Hidden Disabilities where a number of representatives from the Benefice attended, underlining our commitment to being open and accessible to all.

The PCC is continuing to work on inclusion and making church accessible and welcoming for all by starting to consider how we can better welcome those who feel excluded because of issues of gender and/or sexuality bias. Ultimately it is hoped we will be able to agree on a statement of ‘Inclusive Church’.

Having completed much needed restoration (with the aid of Heritage England and funding from the National Lottery Fund) we aim to use our church building for a wider range of community activities.

In October of 2018, Cantare Ladies' Choir performed to an audience made up of people from the benefice and wider community.

In November of 2018 the primary school hosted an event (film show) in church to help raise funds for a new school library.

This is an exciting time as we prayerfully work to discern and learn more of God's plans for us.

14. Finance and Stewardship

The accounts for the last three years are attached. The church's financial status can be described as balanced i.e. sufficient income to pay the Parish Share in full each year (currently £25,500), together with all general running costs, including an agreed contribution to the office costs of the benefice, the Rector's expenses and reimbursement of expenses incurred by licensed ministers. In 2017 the Parish Share was fixed by discussion and agreement with diocesan representatives for a period of three years. The amount will increase each year by around 5%. Planned giving (and Gift Aid tax reclaim) accounts for 82% of our regular giving, with the remainder coming from other collections, donations and an occasional Gift Day. Although collection plates are placed at the back of church it is not our practice to 'pass the plate' at services.

As with many churches which have a C of E primary/secondary school connections we minister to many young families and their children, but we find financial giving from this group to be a challenge. We recognise the opportunities that such families present whilst being realistic about the intention to gain church attendance for school entry.

Until the commencement of the roof/re-order project we tithed our church income which resulted in significant donations being made to both home and international charities. The tithe was suspended for the duration of the project, but will be revisited in the future.

The Next Rector of Middleton and Thornham

From the submitted profiles of each parish the following personal attributes and skills are required:

- A prayerful person of God, open to the direction of the Holy Spirit and with a heart for mission, who will exercise the cure of souls in collaboration with the bishop together with clergy and lay colleagues in the parishes. One who promotes the Kingdom of God on earth by making whole-life disciples.
- A confident and organised team player with strong collaborative leadership qualities, who communicates well, including the ability to delegate and to successfully manage, value and develop a large team of clergy (both training stipendiary and non-stipendiary) and lay people to fulfil their potential.
- A biblically based preacher who will support and develop the continuing styles of worship and be open to new ways of communicating the Gospel to the upcoming generation.
- A person who will direct and be accountable for the achievement of each parish's MAP and have a good understanding of stewardship in its broadest sense.
- A person who is approachable, compassionate and empathetic with all ages and stages of faith both inside and outside of the church community.
- A person who has the ability to build on the strengths of both parishes whilst addressing weaknesses and encouraging collaboration at all levels; building up and collaborating with the Body of Christ at work across the benefice.
- A sensitive pioneer who seeks God's vision for the benefice in all areas of its life and who will take an active lead in helping the churches engage with their communities, working cooperatively with other churches and organisations to promote and inspire people to proclaim the good news.
- A person committed to maintaining and encouraging links between schools, businesses, local groups and the church, prepared to serve on church school governing bodies, and take a keen interest in their activities.
- A person with experience of ministering in a benefice of this size and nature. We would also expect them to have an on-going commitment to safe church standards, safe recruitment and child protection guidelines and to have, or be willing to gain, a good understanding of disability and the impact of mental health difficulties, with a genuine desire to promote inclusion and ensure a church family that values and welcomes all individuals.

In summary, an inspirational team player with good social skills; someone spirit-led and forward-looking who will continue to promote growth; a good communicator across all age groups, church groups and the wider community; a person who will encourage others.

Both churches are committed to growth through outreach. The great challenge we both face is to seek, through prayer and sharing, how we can work more effectively together under one stipendiary minister, sharing gifts, skills and resources and doing more as one church family.

Representatives

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