

The Rt. Revd Dr Jane Steen

Bishop of Lynn

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Priest-in-Charge, Benefice of Walsingham, Houghton and Barsham; Hempton with Pudding Norton (to be held in plurality)

Dear Friends in Christ,

Benefice and Role

Thank you for inquiring for details for this post. You will find much detailed information about the benefice in the profile, and this letter supplements that with further information about the diocese and about the background to the post. If you are exploring this role from outside the diocese, and especially if you do not come from a rural background, let me encourage you to continue in this discernment. Norfolk people don't shout about themselves or their county or their diocese, but if you come here, there's a very high chance that you will never wish to leave.

The Walsingham benefice is comprised of two parishes: East, North and West Barsham, and Little Walsingham with Great Walsingham and Houghton. The benefice was held with Hempton under the last incumbent, and we are in the process of formalising that so that they will be held in plurality. Like Walsingham, Hempton is a petitioning parish and there is a commitment to upholding this tradition.

Walsingham is a flourishing benefice. Several of its churches have had new facilities (about which you can read more in the profile). At least one church has started a new service and numbers of families and children attending have increased over the past five years. There is a stronger sense of church family than before covid, and this is important given the place of Little Walsingham S Mary as a pilgrimage destination. That, of course, brings many blessings but also has its challenges.

Walsingham is also blessed with many retired clergy, so that a new incumbent will not minister alone. The Anglican Shrine and its clergy also offer helpful working relationships. The Shrine is held within the benefice although obviously with its own clergy, and it is important that there are good relationships between Shrine and benefice. Both also sit within the Diocese of Norwich and while the Bishop of Richborough offers day-to-day pastoral and sacramental care, the Bishop of Norwich (Shrine) and the Bishop and Archdeacon of Lynn (benefice) seek to build good relationships and to offer support as well as welcoming suitable invitations e.g., to preach.

Diocese and Deanery

The Diocese of Norwich's vision is to be Transformed by Christ: Prayerful, Pastoral, Prophetic. You can find out more information about this at <https://www.dioceseofnorwich.org/about/vision/>.

We are drawing together the strategic project work you will see described there to create a mission and ministry strategy for a sustainable and flourishing future. The Diocese has various ways in which lay people can participate in pastoral care and in leading worship, including as LLMs but also as Authorised Worship Assistants and Authorised Pastoral Assistants.

The Benefice falls within the Archdeaconry and Area of Lynn and within the Burnham & Walsingham Deanery. The Bishop of Norwich is currently discerning the next Rural Dean. The Bishop of Lynn's area of oversight is coterminous with the archdeaconry and both the Venerable Catherine Dobson and the Rt Revd Dr Jane Steen are committed to the flourishing of rural benefices, including, of course, the benefices of Walsingham and Hempton.

There are 6 posts of incumbent status in the Deanery, 1 Licensed Lay Minister and 34 Clergy with PtO. Currently, there are no Authorised Worship Assistants (AWAs) or Authorised Pastoral Assistants (APAs) in the benefice but there are 9 AWAs in the deanery, enabling laity to lead services of the Word and 2 Authorised Pastoral Assistants (APAs) in the deanery.

Attendance at Deanery Synod and Chapter is an expectation, and all diocesan clergy are encouraged to give some part of their time and energies to the wider life of the Diocese.

Housing

The accommodation provided is described in the profile. Questions about the house should be directed to the Archdeacon of Lynn, the Venerable Catherine Dobson at archdeacon.lynn@dioceseofnorwich.org.

Patronage

Patrons for the Walsingham benefice are The Hon Mrs Susanna Soames and Mrs Priscilla Meath Baker.

The patron for Hempton with Pudding Norton is HM King Charles III.

The closing date for applications is Thursday 12th February (9.00am) and interviews will be held on Wednesday 4th March. The post is subject to a Genuine Occupational Requirement and a satisfactory enhanced DBS disclosure.

If you would like to have an informal discussion before deciding whether to apply, please contact Ann Whittet (PA to the Bishop and Archdeacon of Lynn) at ann.whittet@dioceseofnorwich.org or phone the office on 01362 709200.

With grace and peace as you discern the role to which God is calling you,

Yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jane Steen', with a stylized, flowing script.

The Rt Revd Dr Jane Steen, Bishop of Lynn