



Parish Profile

Lowton and Golborne Team Ministry

St Thomas – St Luke – St Mary



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Section One – Summary of the Profile:

We are a Team of three vibrant parishes on the edge of the Metropolitan Borough of Wigan just north of Warrington. Our parishes cover a wide variety of places. There is urban and industrial, countryside and farm land – there is even a country park and a large lake. We have canals and railways, roads and bridleways. We have lots of people doing lots of things in the Lord's service.

The purpose of this Parish Profile is to show you what we can do for you and what we'd like you to do with us.

Together we will be able to achieve lots, and continue to show God's love in this community.

The Lowton and Golborne Team was formally licensed in September 2013.

We are looking forward to welcoming a new Team Rector to the team. Our team ministry is a great place to live, work and minister. The aim of this profile is to give you a taste of what we do and to explain to you the sort of person we need to join us.

We are passionate about our mission and ministry. We have three churches in our team which are different and similar at the same time. We have many parish organisations and many groups in our community are involved with us using our buildings, worshipping with us and being part of our prayerful and spiritual community.

The clergy team consists of two posts. The previous Team Rector, Revd. Jonathan Stott, retired in February 2022 and we have a Team Vicar, Rev Trevor Hodson, who joined the team in 2018.

The ministry team at present includes four licensed Readers (one due to take a sabbatical) plus one in training until September 2022 and two laity leaders with permission to officiate.

This profile tells the story of our parishes and the area of Lowton and Golborne. This Team Ministry covers a large area encompassing former industrial areas, new industries, farm land and many houses in varying sizes and styles. It's a town and country area and has close transport links with the rest of the North West.

We hold many occasional offices and are involved in working with nine local schools with varying degrees of involvement.

Please read through our profile and take some time to think and pray. We need this appointment to be right for the person appointed and right for our Team Ministry.

Section Two – The Team Rector we would like to have:

We see the new Team Rector as being someone who is, in St. Paul's words to Timothy, a worker approved by God. "Do your best to present yourself to God, as one approved by him, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly explaining the word of truth." 2
Timothy 2: 15(NRSV)

We would like a man or woman who can work collaboratively with the Team Vicar and the ministry team:-

To be a Spirit filled shepherd

To be dedicated to the Lord's service

To be an innovative preacher and teacher

To be prayerful and sensitive to people's needs

To have a sense of humour

To be able to work in and embrace the diverse worship of the churches in the Team Ministry

To be a good communicator and a good listener

Able to initiate and manage change

To develop vocations across the three parishes both ordained and lay

To be able to develop a children's and youth ministry

To be able to organise and chair meetings

Section Three – About the Lowton & Golborne Team:

History of Lowton:

Lowton dates back to the 13th century. Originally it was an agricultural village being made up of Commons and Folds and surrounded by large estates. John Byrom, the writer of the well-known Christmas Carol: 'Christians awake', lived at Byrom Hall, which is situated in the Lowton area.

Alongside agriculture, cottage industries, such as silk and cotton weaving, flourished and provided the villagers with employment. With the arrival of 'new' industrial towns these cottage industries disappeared and people left Lowton to find work elsewhere. Agriculture remained the main employer, however, it is no longer the main source of employment in the area as new industries have moved in. There has been a marked increase in housing over the last 50 years, so that Lowton is now mainly a residential area.

Lowton Today:

Even though there has been an increase in housing, present day Lowton retains some village characteristics, St Luke's church is situated on a crossroads with two pubs and an off licence with a post office on the corners. There is a small selection of restaurants and a Co-op supermarket and a community hall situated opposite the church on Church Lane. Lowton St Mary's is a pretty church on the main Newton to Leigh road, in fact part of the parish is situated in Leigh. There is a community hall sited next door to the church and the primary school is behind the hall.

Lowton is a large area containing mostly owner occupied houses. There are many new estates being built and this is a great mission opportunity for us.

Part of the parish of St. Mary's falls within the Leigh town boundary, Lowton has become a desirable place to live, with excellent road links, being close to the M6, M62, M61 and with the A580 running through it.

The village is approximately 3 miles from west to east, and 2 miles from north to south – this includes both the parish of St. Luke's as well as that of St. Mary's. The current population is approximately 17,000.

Though Lowton is close to several towns and cities such as Liverpool (19 miles) and Manchester (13 miles), Leigh, Wigan and Warrington, the countryside is just a step away offering many lovely walks. The nearby Pennington country park, which is within the parish of St. Mary's offers water sports, golf, and fishing, and is home to a great variety of water birds. Horse riding is also a popular activity.



Tucked away behind the facade of the houses are several small industrial estates providing some local employment. There are also still one or two farms in operation.

History of Golborne:

Golborne has been a settlement from before the Norman conquest and is mentioned in the Domesday book. It was a 'Dual Manor' with Lowton and the area around Manor Avenue is named after the manors.

Golborne had a well dedicated to St Oswald, it played its part in the Civil War and was a place of industrial expansion during the nineteenth century.

Mining played an important part in the history of both Golborne and Lowton. The former area Headquarters of the National Coal Board were located in Lowton and there were several collieries in the area including Golborne Colliery. Golborne Colliery was the scene of a terrible methane explosion in March 1979 which claimed the lives of 10 miners. It is commemorated.

Golborne Today:

Golborne has a real mixture of housing. Some social housing and some owner occupied housing. There is also a big mix of styles. Golborne has some interesting shops on the High Street. There are local bakers and butchers. The town also boasts both a Lidl and Asda supermarket.

Golborne has, like many places, had its ups and downs. The heavy industry and mining that once predominated no longer exists, but employment is provided by newer companies. There are three business parks which are home to some production, distribution and IT companies. The national HQ of Sofology is located in Golborne. There are also many local eateries, pubs and take-aways.

Like Lowton, Golborne is well placed for motorway links. The East Lancashire Road dissects the area and the M6 and M62 are in easy reach. Trains to both Liverpool and Manchester can be accessed from Newton-le-Willows station which is a 5 minute drive away. Golborne is of a similar area to Lowton with a population of approx. 24,000.

Lowton and Golborne Schools:

Schools ministry is very important to us and we are involved, in one way or another, in all our local schools.

There are **9** schools in the area that the team is involved with:

Golborne St Thomas Cof E Junior and Infant's School (VA)

Lowton St Luke's Cof E Primary School (VA)

Lowton St Mary's Cof E Primary School (VA)

Lowton West Community Primary School

Gilded Hollins Community Primary School

Lowton Community Junior and Infant School

Golborne Community Primary School

Lowton Cof E High School

Golborne High School

Our church primary schools have regular assemblies and school Eucharists in school and selected years come to church every week. St Luke's Primary to St Luke's church on Wednesdays, St Thomas' Primary to St Thomas' church on Wednesdays and St Mary's Primary to St Mary's church on Thursdays.

The clergy are well known to the children at school. We have less formal relationships with the other schools, hosting Christmas and Easter services. Also, we do guided tours of the churches for all schools and are always open and welcoming towards school groups.

We welcome Lowton C of E High School to St Mary's approximately 4 times a year. We host services to mark the beginning of the year, harvest, Christmas etc. We also host a moving remembrance service for the High School in November. Worship is led by the chaplain and the Team Rector.

It is a great privilege to be allowed to minister in our schools. We have great relationships with all our schools and we have some amazing, dedicated and hardworking head teachers. We have a great relationship with all our head teachers and people from our congregations are on school governing bodies.

The Team Rector was a governor at two of our church schools.

All our church primaries are rated as 'Good' by Ofsted and 'Outstanding' by SIAMS.

A passion for school ministry is essential for a new Team Rector.

History of our churches:

The oldest church in the team is Lowton St Luke's. It was built in 1732 and consecrated in 1733. The bell tower was added in 1862. Originally a chapel of ease for Winwick Parish Church, St Luke's became an independent parish in the early nineteenth century and has served the people of Lowton ever since. The church was originally built with galleries and box pews and is built in a cruciform shape. Extensive re-ordering in 1973 removed the box pews and the south and north transept galleries creating a more flexible space for worship. The altar is centrally located in the crossing of the church, thus enabling everyone to get a good view. St Luke's today is a church building in good condition. It is a grade 2 listed building. The church is built of brick with stone dressings. The stone dressings have been recently repainted. The churchyard is maintained by a small group of volunteers and, in common with all our churches, the churchyard contains a war memorial, which was renovated in 2018.

Lowton St Mary's is a small, pretty church centrally located in the churchyard. The gardens around the church are lovingly maintained by volunteers. The church is built of stone in a Victorian gothic style with a small western bellcote and is in good order. St Mary's was built by local mill owner, Mary Legh in 1861 and was dedicated to St Mary in honour of Mrs Legh and the Blessed Virgin Mary. The chancel of St Mary's was a little cluttered and so this was re-ordered during an extensive re-decoration project which was carried out in 2017.

Golborne St Thomas is the largest of the three churches in the team. The church was built in 1849 and had links with St James the Great in Haydock. St Thomas sits in one of the largest churchyards, if not the largest, in the Diocese of Liverpool. A new purpose built centre on two stories was built onto the church in 1999 to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the building of St Thomas. The town of Golborne has sprung up around the church with the West Coast Main Line from London to Glasgow passing just down the road.

All our churches have a prayerful, welcoming and warm feel and are centres of our local communities.



Section Four - About our churches:

We have a lot going on! We host many occasional offices. We are first choice for funerals in the area. We have been known to have 9 funerals across the team in one week before now, but please don't be put off! We don't have that many all the time. We average about 120 funerals per year. Two of our Readers occasionally take funerals, and we are helped by some local retired clergy.

We have approximately 20 weddings per year across the team.

We also have lots of baptisms! In a typical year we baptise 100 children across the team. This is a great way to meet families. We don't baptise in our main Sunday worship services as we are unable to facilitate the vast number of people who come to them, also, with one priest in the team, at present, baptisms are every week at one of our churches. St Luke's hosts baptisms on the first Sunday of the month, St Mary's on the second and fourth (this is due to St Mary's being the smallest of our churches and sometimes it is difficult to fit everyone in!) St Thomas' hosts baptisms on the third Sunday of the month.

Our worship style could be described as being of the central Anglican tradition, although we have some different types of services including Common Worship, Eucharists, Praise services, Taize and contemporary and traditional non Eucharistic services. St. Mary's and St. Thomas's each have a robed choir. St Luke's had a robed choir until quite recently. St Mary's also has a praise group who lead praise services and youth and young people's services (pre-covid).

Messy Church is thriving at St Mary's with an approximate attendance of 100 people each month (pre-covid). St Thomas runs a weekly Sunday Club with around 12 children and St Luke's Sunday Club is attended by 15-20 families.

The weekly attendances for Sunday services are on average at St Thomas' 50, St Luke's 85 and St Mary's 100 pre-covid and 35, 40 and 65 resp., post-covid.

Weekday services take place at all three churches on Wednesday at St Luke's with an attendance of around 25 adults, Thursday morning at St Thomas' with an attendance of about 10-15 adults and Thursday morning at St Mary's with an adult attendance of 25-30.

We meet together as a team for Holy Week Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Ascension Day and Harvest.

We would like to meet together more often for worship and pray this will be possible in future when we have a new clergy person in the team.

A full list of worship is below:

St Thomas:

Sunday 8.30am – alternates with St Luke's

Holy Communion BCP

Sunday 10.30am –

Parish Communion twice a month,
Morning Worship once a month and a
Parade service once a month (pre-covid).

Sunday 12.00pm –

Holy Baptisms on the third Sunday
of the month.

Wednesday 9.00am –

School Eucharist with 2 year groups from St Thomas School (pre-covid).

Thursday 9.30am – Holy Communion



St Luke's:

Sunday 8.30am – alternates with St Thomas's

Holy Communion BCP

Sunday 10.00am –

Parish Communion twice a month,
Morning Worship twice a month with a
School Praise service four times a year (pre-covid).

Sunday 12.00pm –

Holy Baptisms on the first Sunday
of the month.

Wednesday 10.00am –

Holy Communion with St Luke's school coming into the service twice termly.



St Mary's:

Sunday 10.30am –

Parish Communion twice a month,
Morning Worship once a month and a
Praise and Parade service once a
month in term time (pre-covid).
Morning Worship during
school holidays.

Sunday 12.15pm –

Holy Baptisms on the second and
fourth Sunday of the month.

Sunday 6.30pm –

Holy Communion, Evening Worship,
Taize & Wholeness/Healing (pre-covid)

Thursday 10.30am –

Holy Communion, one year group from St Mary's school join this service each week during term time (pre-covid).

Messy Church at 10.30am followed by lunch on the third Saturday of each month.



We also did have an active ecumenical group pre-covid. 'Churches Together in Lowton and Golborne' comprises of the Anglican Team ministry, All Saints' with St Catherine RC Church, Heath Street Methodist Church and Lowton Independent Methodist Church. We hold annual All Souls' services in our churches and they are very well received and attended.



The following are some of the areas of church life that are well supported by the gifts and talents of the church family across the team and wider community.

- Four licensed Readers in the Team
- 2 Laity Leaders with permission to officiate
- 3 Teams of intercessors
- People who read the lesson
- 3 Pastoral Visiting Teams
- 1 Baptism Preparation Team
- 1 Confirmation Preparation Team
- St Mary's Prayer Circle
- 3 PCCs
- Sides persons
- Ministry group to plan rotas & services
- Volunteers who maintain the churchyards
- St Mary's Coffee and Chat – meet on a Thursday morning
- Tea and Coffee on a Sunday morning after the service
- 3 Flower arranging groups
- 3 Social Committees who plan a wide range of activities
- Volunteers who sit in church each morning allowing the church to be open to anyone who wants to come in (pre-covid).
- 3 Vestry hour teams
- Vergers, sacristans
- Messy Church leaders and volunteers
- House Groups – Bible Study (pre-covid)
- 1 Mothers' Union group
- 2 Choirs; Music Group; Praise Group (pre-covid)
- 2 Church Magazines; seasonal leaflets; Sunday Notice Sheets
- Team Council (pre-covid)
- Knit and natter and the Scrabble group at St Luke's
- 'Good as new' Coffee mornings at St Thomas'.
- St Mary's Mums and Toddlers
- Active uniformed organisations at St Thomas's and St Mary's



Not everything that we do is listed above, we have so much going on that an exhaustive list would be too long, but as you can see there is plenty to keep you busy and we would like you, if you feel this Team is right for you, to come and take part in leading our activities.

For the future we recognise that there are areas of church life that need to be developed such as a Youth Ministry and encouraging 25 – 40 year olds to join the church family.

These are areas which can be developed collaboratively in the Lowton and Golborne Team. We have lots of ideas, come and join us and put your ideas into the pot too.

We have three extensive churchyards which are either full or nearly full. St Thomas' and St Mary's are currently accepting full burials and burials of cremated remains. St Luke's is only accepting burials of cremated remains as there is no room left for new graves. All our churches offer re-opening of graves until they are full and re-opening of cremated remains plots for second burials. We bury many cremated remains as most families who have a funeral at one of our churches request the ashes of their loved ones to be interred in our churchyards. We try to make funerals and burials of ashes as special as possible for families and this ministry is always greatly appreciated.

Section Five – About our Context:

The Team Ministry was initially created in 2013. Our previous Team Rector (Rev Jonathan Stott) joined as Rector in 2015 and was followed by Rev Trevor Hodson in 2018 as Team Vicar. Until now the team clergy have ministered in the three churches between them equally, with the Team Rector holding governance responsibilities across the team. We recognise the burden this places on the Team Rector, and in the future it would be better for the Team Rector to have pastoral responsibility for one church together with overall leadership and governance, and the Team Vicar pastoral responsibility for two churches. This arrangement would be shaped by the new Team Rector along with the Team Vicar and other ministers, and the Team Rector would have the backing of the three standing committees to try this new way of working.

Housing – there are two Rectories – one at St Thomas's (currently rented out) and one at St Luke's (St Mary's vicarage was sold in 2015). Rev Trevor Hodson currently does not live within the Team Parish.

Good links are in place in our team between our churches, schools and local community groups. The local councillors use St Mary's coffee and chat for their surgery on a Thursday morning and all three of our churches are seen as being central to the life of the community.

Unfortunately, the number of people who claim allegiance to our churches but don't come to worship on a regular basis is very large and parish share remains a challenge. This is an issue across our deanery so we have put some plans in place, as a deanery, to try and fix the problem. As a deanery, we are concerned about our financial situation.

We are also hoping that when we have a full complement of clergy we will be able to get back to the work of mission and making disciples of all people. We acknowledge that having two members of the clergy serving three busy parishes is a challenge. But with God's grace and the work that is being done by our dedicated Readers and lay ministries we can move forward in the Lord's service together.

Lowton and Golborne is a great place to live and work. It combines town and country, affluent areas and not so affluent areas and a whole host of different and diverse people.

There are many new estates being built in this area. At least 2000 new homes are being built across out three parishes and this is a great opportunity for us.

Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council have given the go ahead for these new developments and they acknowledge that local infrastructure will need to be upgraded. The biggest challenge will be around the area of education. Our local schools already operate at virtually full capacity and so there will need to be an expansion to deal with the planned influx of new children.

Because we have so many church schools the church can be and should be involved in this redevelopment, so there are exciting times ahead.

Also, we need to minister to the new people who are going to be living in our community as well as maintaining the ministries we are currently engaged in.

This will be a challenge to all of us and we hope that as you are reading this profile, you will be able to discern whether God is calling you to minister here with us in this place.

Our context is one of change, challenge, community engagement and growth. We are positive about our future and we pray that you will feel the call to come and work and worship with us.

Thank you for taking the time to read our Parish Profile.