



## Rector for the Benefice of Lower Teesdale

### ROLE DESCRIPTION

Role description signed off by Ven Dr James Theodosius,  
Archdeacon of Richmond and Craven

Date: July 2025

### 1 Details of post

<b>Role title (as on licence):</b>	Rector
<b>Name of benefices:</b>	Benefice of Lower Teesdale: the Parish of Startforth with Brignall, the Parish of Bowes, the Parish of Romaldkirk and the Parish of Laithkirk
<b>Episcopal area:</b>	The Episcopal Area of Ripon
<b>Archdeaconry:</b>	Archdeaconry of Richmond and Craven
<b>Deanery:</b>	Richmond
Initial point of contact on terms of service: Archdeacon of Richmond and Craven	

### 2 Role Purpose

#### Specific

The person appointed will be

1. **Vision specific** eg the priest who will facilitate with other leaders the identification of God's vision for ministry and mission in the Benefice of Lower Teesdale, building upon the experience and achievements so far.
2. **Church growth specific** the priest who will always understand their context as a place for an increase in Christian growth and discipleship.
3. **Public role specific** eg the person who, working with others, keeps the bigger horizon in view, and sees the churches in Benefice of Lower Teesdale as instruments of the Kingdom of God, led

by the Holy Spirit to be both servants of the community alongside other agencies whilst also bringing a prophetic voice to the church and community.

4. **Team leader specific** eg the senior Anglican priest in the Benefice of Lower Teesdale who will lead the ministerial team, lay and ordained, comprising five church wardens, a Licenced Lay Minister and the retired clergy.

5. To work with the PCC in their stated aims and objectives:

- To lead our Worship
- To listen to the experience and expectations of the parishioners in order to understand more about the needs of the local area and about what has been successful/unsuccessful in the past
- To work with the PCCs to formulate and deliver the mission priorities
- To explore innovative ways of working together
- To engage with young people and our local Primary schools
- To help Churches re-energize and grow
- To follow the Green Environmental Mission of the Church

### **General**

- To share with the Bishop both in the cure of souls and in responsibility, under God, for “building confident Christians, growing churches and transforming communities”;
- To have regard to the calling and responsibilities of the clergy as described in the Canons, the Ordinal, the Code of Professional Conduct for the Clergy and other relevant legislation including safeguarding;
- To build up the Kingdom of God in the Benefice of Lower Teesdale and more widely in the Diocese;
- To promote the health of the Church and its growth in numbers, in spiritual commitment and in service to local communities;
- To have regard to the Diocesan Strategy (see Appendix), including collaborating with others to develop a flourishing children and youth ministry within reach of every young person;
- To undertake any duties that may reasonably be required of the role.

### **3 Key Working Relationships**

- The Bishop of Leeds
- The Bishop of Ripon (with responsibility for the Ripon Episcopal Area)
- The Archdeacon of Richmond and Craven
- The Area Dean and Deanery Lay Chair
- The Deanery Synods and Clergy Chapter

- The Diocesan Office team, including the Human Resources Manager
- The Diocesan Mission and Ministry Team
- The Area Clergy Development Officer
- Clergy and lay colleagues
- Churchwardens
- The Parochial Church Council
- Ecumenical partners / Ministers of churches in the area
- Local community partners including schools.

#### *Future*

- Local councillors and other civic leaders
- Head teachers of schools
- Leaders of other religious communities
- Ripon Cathedral Rural Ministry Forum

#### *Supportive:*

- Clergy Counselling Support

### **4 Health and Wellbeing**

The Diocese of Leeds is committed to promote the wellbeing of our clergy and their households in terms expressed in the Church of England's Covenant for Clergy Care and Wellbeing. We also expect our clergy to manage their time well to ensure that they:

- Take a regular day off each week, trying to ensure that this includes the preceding evening and if the weekly day off is compromised for whatsoever reason, to take a day off in lieu;
- Take their full annual leave allowance each year (six weeks holiday plus Bank Holidays, or time in lieu of Bank Holidays);
- Pay attention to their spiritual wellbeing, including daily prayer and Bible reading, reading / learning in general, quiet days and an annual retreat;
- Build collegial relationships across the Deanery, Episcopal Area and Diocese;
- Engage fully with their annual Ministerial Development Review and Continued Ministerial Development and Education;
- Advise the Area Dean, Archdeacon or Area Bishop as early as possible of any health, stress or anxiety concerns;
- Engage in a continuous learning relationship (eg work mentor, spiritual director, peer group) which supports and encourages their ministry. The Area Bishop or Archdeacon can provide a directory of spiritual directors and mentors should this be required.

The Diocese of Leeds works with Health Assured, our Employee Assistance Programme, in delivering a confidential, professional source of support, including a helpline and counselling services, to its clergy and spouses.

Despite the reference to 'Employees', the programme provides services closely suited to the needs of clergy. Details can be seen at <https://www.healthassured.org/>

The HR team at Church House are also available to talk through any issues or questions.

For further information, go to the diocesan website: <https://www.leeds.anglican.org/how-we-can-help/supporting-clergy/wellbeing-counselling-and-support-for-clergy/wellbeing-counselling-and-support-for-clergy> or ring this free and confidential helpline: 0800 028 0199.

## 5 Archdeacon's Comment

***Our vision as the Diocese*** is about confident clergy equipping confident Christians to live and tell the good news of Jesus Christ. For all of our appointments we are seeking clergy who have a joyful and confident faith which has inspired a track record of deepening discipleship and church growth.

***This appointment is to the Benefice of Lower Teesdale*** in the far north west of the Diocese of Leeds, with Barnard Castle, as the main regional centre (itself located in the Diocese of Durham). The six communities serve a mainly rural area. The Rector appointed will serve these lively communities with a good mix of age ranges, with two Primary Schools, one of which is Church of England aided. Employment is in a range of industries, farming, services, tourism and pharmaceuticals (Glaxo Smith Kline). His Majesty's Young Offender Institution (HMYOI) Deerbolt is also situated locally with a dedicated Chaplaincy team. Unemployment across the Benefice is very low at less than 2%.

***The tradition of the churches*** is central, rural with a reverence for the Sacraments and an expectation of good preaching. There is one Reader, and considerable assistance is given by retired Clergy. The churches all have active lay involvement with a good record of on the ground engagement. These people are keen to work with a Rector who will help them to reach out to families and younger people, to deepen discipleship and understanding of the faith and to encourage the gifts in every member.

***There is a particular need*** to help the parishes move towards a new Pastoral scheme of two Parishes with two PCCs. This exploration has been agreed by the PCCs and they are keen to engage with this process which will certainly help simplify the governance and provide more energy for mission and ministry. This is an exciting opportunity for significant and meaningful change.

### ***Current Overview:***

PCCs: 4; Churchwardens: 5; Clergy: Rector; Readers: 1

Buildings: St Giles Bowes Grade 2, St Mary Brignall Grade 2, St Cuthbert Cotherstone n/a, Laithkirk (no dedication) Grade 2, St Romald Romaldkirk Grade 1, Holy Trinity Startforth Grade 2

Population: 4215 (overall increase – largely due to new housing developments in Startforth)

Average Sunday attendance across Benefice: 50

Expenses: Paid in full

Resolution: None

Church Tradition: Open

**All new appointees in the Diocese are required to undertake:**

- (i) the diocesan induction programme which includes diocesan training for safeguarding children and vulnerable adults,
- (ii) a course on presence and engagement in the context of other faiths, and
- (iii) the residential “*Leading Your Church into Growth*” course (LYCiG).
- (iv) rural ministry training.

Newly appointed clergy are to book onto a LYCiG conference within 12 months of their appointment, *and ideally to attend with some people from their parish*. Experienced mentors and training are available to new incumbents to make the most of LYCiG. It is also encouraged that those involved in rural ministry, sign up to the Ripon Cathedral Rural Ministry Forum.

The accommodation offered will be the The Rectory, Ashbourne House, Cotherstone, DL12 9PR as detailed in the Parish Brochure. Prior visits, if necessary, can be arranged via the Archdeacon’s PA. Please contact [chloe.drummond@leeds.anglican.org](mailto:chloe.drummond@leeds.anglican.org)

## ***APPENDIX: Our Diocesan Strategy***

### **Barnabas Encouraging Confidence**

The Diocese of Leeds is committed to building **confident Christians** who are part of **growing churches** and helping to **transform communities**.

As followers of Jesus, we are called to **share the Good News**, serve others and make a positive difference in our communities. To help us do this, we need to be **confident** in our faith, in our churches and in the future.

Over the next 10 years, we are focusing on four key areas:

- **Confidence in our Mission** – Helping churches understand their purpose and make the best use of their buildings, time, and resources.
- **Confidence in our Future** – Ensuring the diocese remains sustainable, effective, and well-prepared for the years ahead.
- **Confidence in our Leadership** – Supporting and equipping everyone who serves in our churches.
- **Confidence in our Witness** – Encouraging and empowering people to share the Good News of Jesus, especially with children and young people.

These **four pillars will guide everything we do from Church House**, helping us work together and support the diocese more effectively.

### **What is Barnabas: Encouraging Confidence?**

Barnabas: Encouraging Confidence is a strategy designed to **support churches in their mission**.

Diocesan teams (and we hope Churches across the diocese) are focused on ensuring their work supports increasing confidence in the 4 areas of mission, future, leadership and witness.

It goes even further through seeking and using additional funding from the national church to provide resources and targeted initiatives which can help churches to **grow, adapt, and thrive**. A dedicated **Barnabas Programme** team will oversee this, working with wider diocesan teams to ensure we get alongside parishes, offering guidance and practical support.

The name **Barnabas** is inspired by the early church leader who encouraged and strengthened others in their faith. In the same way, this strategy aims to **build up** and **equip** churches so they can

move forward with confidence.

As we step forward, we do so with a shared commitment to seeing our churches and communities flourish.