



*The Erringden Benefice and
St. Mary's Luddenden with Luddenden Foot*

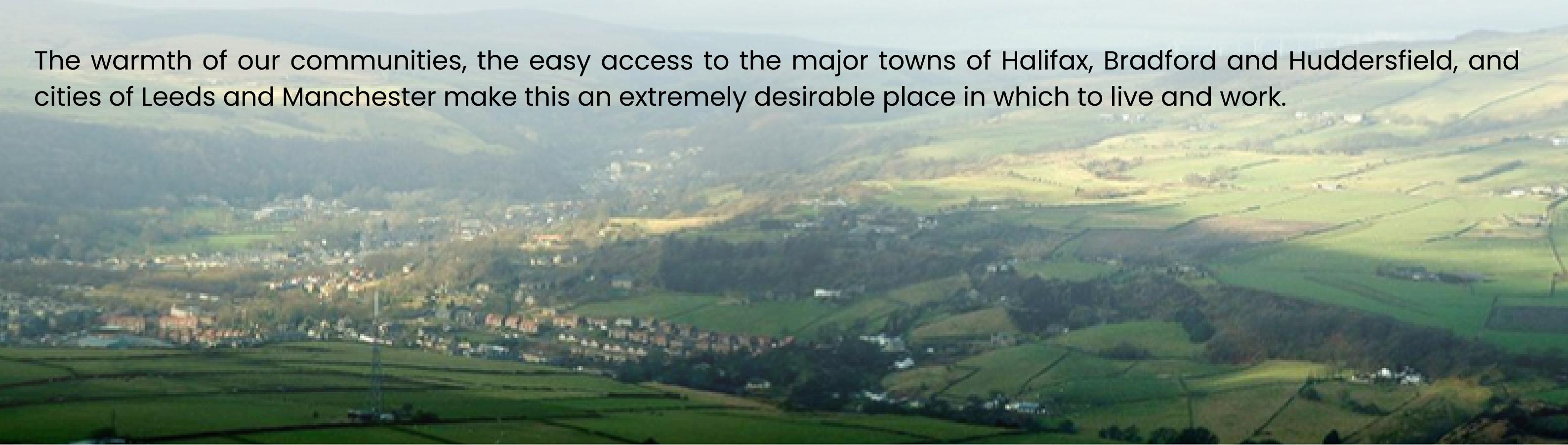
THE CALDER VALLEY

The Calder Valley is an unsung jewel in the South Pennines and is home to some of the oldest communities in West Yorkshire.

This beautiful valley, known for its rugged landscape of rivers, hills, and moorland, is home to the upper reaches of the River Calder. In the valley bottom, river, road, railway and canal nestle side by side. The valley is rich in history, featuring a mix of industrial heritage, natural beauty and farmland, and is characterised by steep-sided valleys carved by the river over millions of years. Walking, cycling, and canal boating are just some of the pursuits on offer here.

Recognised for its artistic and literary highlights, the valley has produced famous names including the hymn writer Stewart Townend, former Poet Laureate Ted Hughes and screenwriter Sally Wainwright, famous for Happy Valley, Gentleman Jack, Last Tango in Halifax and her latest production, Riot Women which was partly filmed in St. Michael's Church Hall.

The warmth of our communities, the easy access to the major towns of Halifax, Bradford and Huddersfield, and cities of Leeds and Manchester make this an extremely desirable place in which to live and work.



OUR CHURCHES & YOU

Our three churches comprise St Michael's, Mytholmroyd and St John the Baptist in the Wilderness, Cragg Vale (which together form the Erringden Benefice) and St Mary the Blessed Virgin, Luddenden with Luddenden Foot. The three have their own unique characteristics and activities, while sharing a common desire to be relevant and forward-looking and to work together to promote the Kingdom of God in our part of the world. For much more detail, please see our individual parish brochures, links here:

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We each have much to offer but also many opportunities for our new priest to make a mark. We're looking for someone to share and expand our vision, grow our churches and help us to develop new ways of working together. The principal qualities we are seeking are:

- The ability to encourage, energise and inspire us
- An eager leader and strong communicator who works well within a team
- The skill to develop the strengths and qualities of others
- A passion for sharing their faith within our communities
- The enthusiasm and vision to work with different styles of worship
- Leadership - and good ideas - in the continuing quest for growth through LyCiG and Re-Weave
- The ability to appreciate the uniqueness of each church and work to make them a focal point of their village communities.
- The will to lead the three churches to a new phase of co-operation and shared ambitions
- A sense of humour, with the ability to manage our progress as we look to build on strong foundations

WHERE WE ARE

Where We are - St Michael's, Mytholmroyd

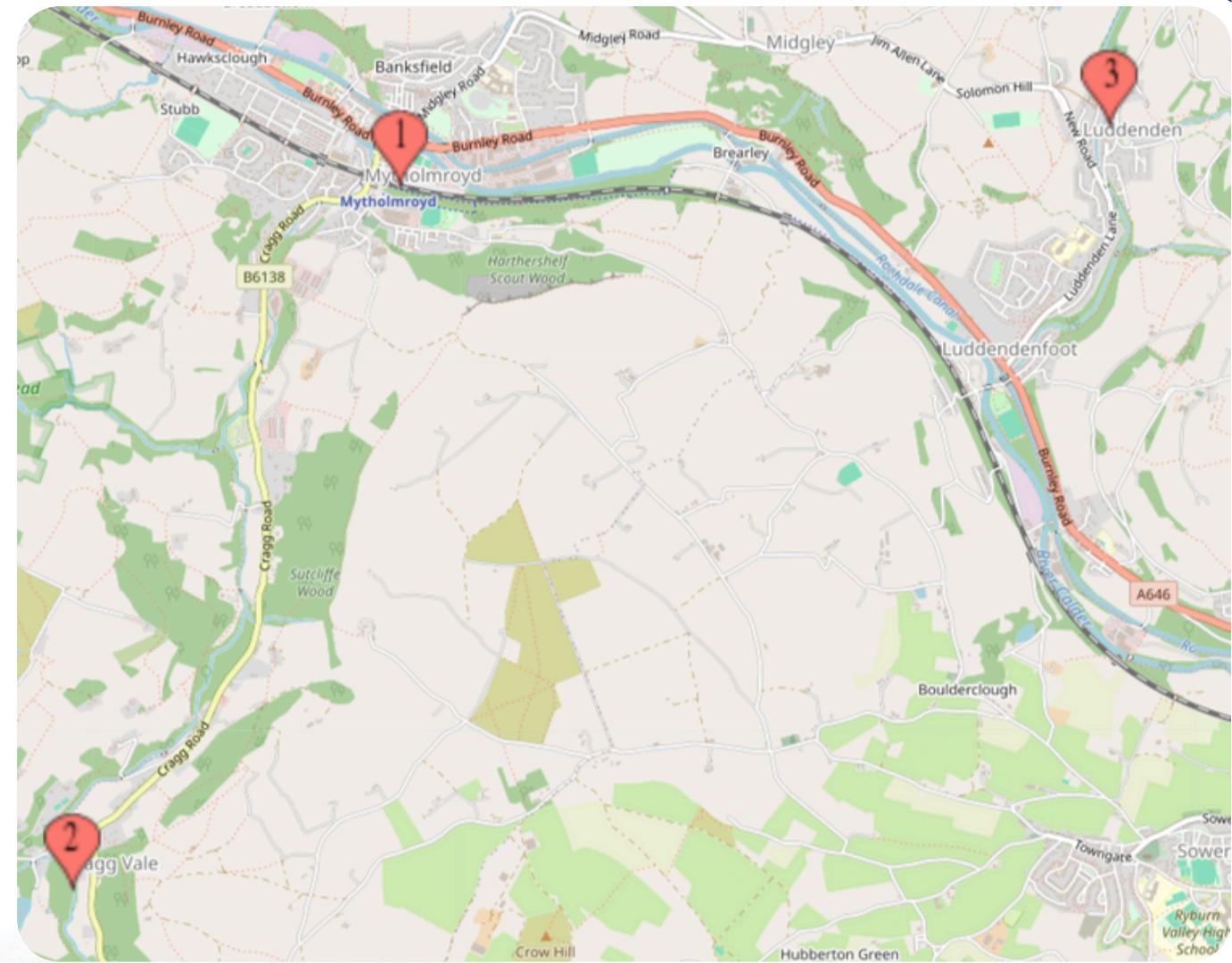
The parish church sits on the banks of the River Calder in the centre of the busy village of Mytholmroyd, whose shops, pubs and other facilities draw people from the surrounding area.

Where We are - St John's in the Wilderness, Cragg Vale

St John's is a very special place; it is a rural parish with the church nestling in a hollow in the beautiful Cragg Valley. Cragg Road boasts the longest continuous ascent in Britain and attracts cyclists of all calibre from far and wide!

Where We are - St Mary's, Luddenden with Luddenden Foot

St Mary's sits in the beautiful Luddenden Dene, in the centre of Luddenden village. Luddenden Dene includes a country park and riverside walks much favoured by visiting walkers who pass the church - and often look in. Also in the parish are Luddenden Foot, another former mill village which straddles the main road through the valley; the Kershaw estate which is a mix of social housing and privately-owned homes; the hamlet of Booth and the hilltop village of Midgley.



WHAT HAPPENS AT OUR CHURCHES

All three churches are 'middle of the road' traditional in terms of worship style.

Each currently has one service on a Sunday morning, and laity as well as clergy participate in leading services.

At St Michael's, complementing our regular Sunday morning service, we have a busy schedule of occasional services, including school services, joint services with other churches, civic services plus the Benefice Remembrance Day Service and the Candlelit Carol Service – both with plenty of young people attending. The congregation of over 40 regular members are mainly older people with some younger adults and a few young families. During our period of vacancy we have seen an increase in numbers.

There has been a strong and long tradition of music at St. Michael's. A choir sings on Sundays and practises each Thursday. We are also fortunate that the pupils from our three primary schools and the juniors from the Amateurs (known as S'MAJIC) sing occasionally at services and bring their families along.



WHAT HAPPENS AT OUR CHURCHES

At St John's, We have a regular Sunday morning service and some occasional services including a Benefice Good Friday Tenebrae, an afternoon Carol Service and a Christmas Eve service. Our average Sunday congregation is 17, and includes many octogenarians and nonagenarians. They are however, surprisingly young in spirit and outlook and are forward looking rather than being 'stuck' in the 'good old days'!

We have a small but enthusiastic choir and an organist. When the organist is unavailable, we make use of modern technology for our music needs!



WHAT HAPPENS AT OUR CHURCHES

At St Mary's, there is some variety in the Sunday services, with a regular Sunday morning pattern of more traditional eucharist (with a robed choir of 12), all-age eucharist and a more informal, lay-led 'Praise@Ten' service. Weekly Sunday congregations average around 60. We have a strong base of older people and an increasing number of young families and married couples.

At Christmas there is a very popular choir-led 'Carols by Candlelight', with an equally popular crib service on Christmas Eve, led by the Praise@Ten team. We usually have a choir-led Stations of the Cross on Good Friday and Choral Evensong at our Patronal Festival.



PASTORAL CARE

A continuing strength of the church community at St Michael's is its care for each other. Our strong pastoral team offers opportunities to welcome people from the village into the church buildings, ensuring that they have transport to and from events.

A large number of the wider community would consider St. Michael's to be "their church" as exemplified by the number of baptisms, weddings and funerals held in the church. The growth of this community spirit was strengthened by the floods of 2015 and 2020, when the devastation of the church buildings and their consequent restorations re-awakened a willingness to help and a resurgence in local pride by church members and the local community alike.

At St John's, we offer informal pastoral care to those in need but don't have a formal pastoral team. The strength of this informal care became apparent during Covid when a swiftly set up 'telephone tree' meant that everyone (congregation members and vulnerable people in the Cragg Community) was in contact with someone regularly and those who were able, could deliver shopping, prescription medicines and so on, as well as just chat with people who needed that contact.

St Mary's has a small pastoral team which keeps in touch with those who are ill. Various individuals also give support particularly to our older congregation members, and we use WhatsApp groups both to mobilise help for those who need it and to offer prayer support.



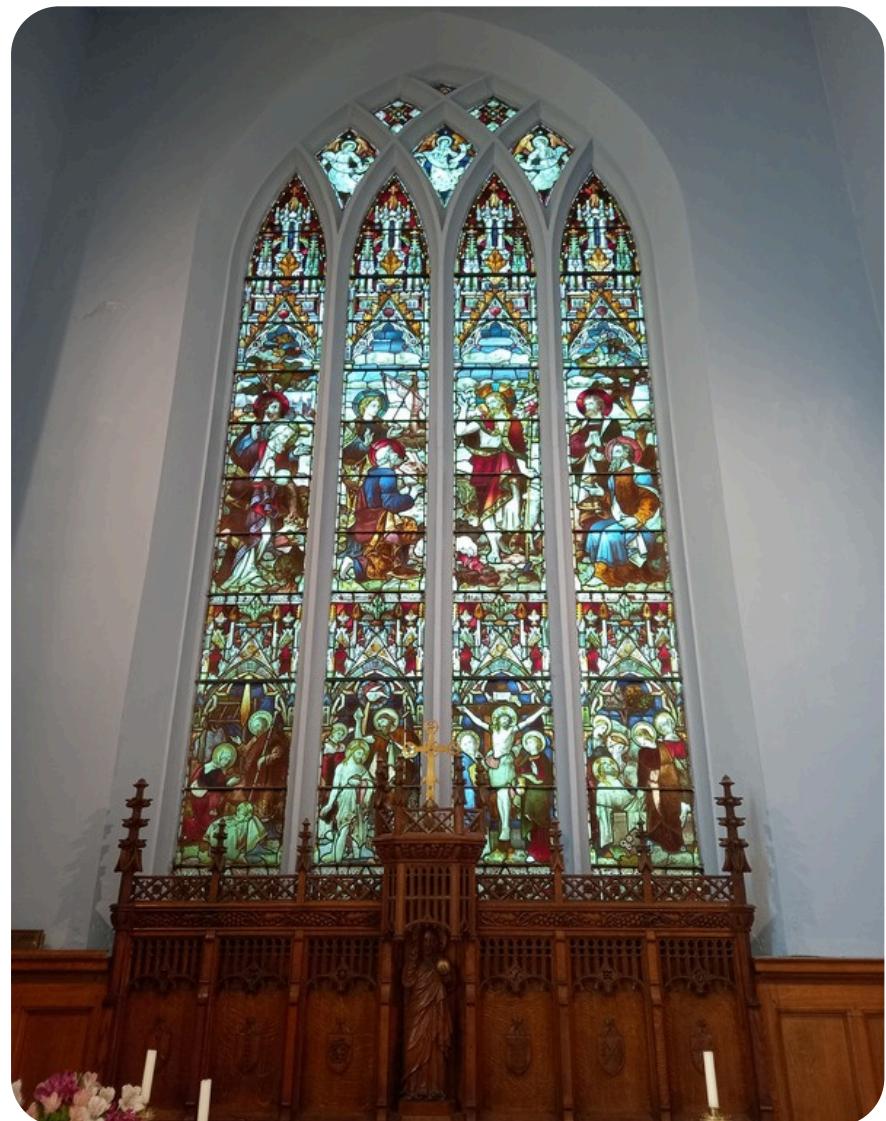
MINISTRY TEAM

The Erringden Benefice has been in vacancy for some two years, while the vicar (50%) at Luddenden is to retire in November 2025.

There is already a strong connection between the three churches in the form of our shared Assistant Minister, a retired SSM.

In the Erringden Benefice, we have been fortunate in having different clergy from our Deanery and beyond help us out during interregnum.

In Luddenden, we have a Licensed Lay Minister (Emeritus) and a Lay Worship Leader as well as the Assistant Minister. A Prayer Ministry team offers prayer after every Sunday service.



GROWING OUR CHURCHES

We are all three committed to growth, addressing it in different ways and looking forward to working more closely together on shared activities to promote this.

The two churches of the Erringden Benefice are actively working with the diocesan Barnabas team as part of the Re-Weave programme. Mytholmroyd has already seen growth in many groups, old and new, as well as a small increase in the regular congregation. At Cragg Vale, the congregation is being encouraged to embrace and take the Re-Weave ideas forward.

Luddenden has been pursuing an intentional 'growing our church' programme, based on LyCiG (Leading your Church into Growth) for about seven years. Our persistence (with much prayer) has borne fruit in the form of growth particularly of young families and of increased activity in the form of social, fundraising and pastoral work. We are now looking at the next stage, having refreshed our mission statement and identified our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.



OUR SPACES

The fabric of all three churches is in good order. The two churches of the Erringden Benefice have been reordered in the last ten years. All three are at the centre of their communities.

St Michael's benefits from an exceptional suite of community rooms, including a licensed bar, used extensively by church and community groups for events and regular bookings plus performances by Mytholmroyd St. Michael's Amateurs. This provides an important source of income for the church. The church itself was consecrated in 1848 and has had several alterations since then including, following the 2015 floods, when it was reordered to make it more accessible. The church is a beautiful building with stunning mosaics of the apostles and the northern saints.

St John's was re-ordered in 2017, making it the focus of community life in the village. We have two amazing, flexible spaces in which to conduct worship and which are available to other village and community organisations for a whole range of activities including Fresh Expressions.

St Mary's, a traditional space with pew seating for over 200, is in good order. A grade II listed building dating from 1816, it includes a small parish room at the back, with adjoining kitchen and toilets, and another equivalent room above. These are used by various local community groups as there are no other community spaces in Luddenden village. The churchyard is used for various church and village events.

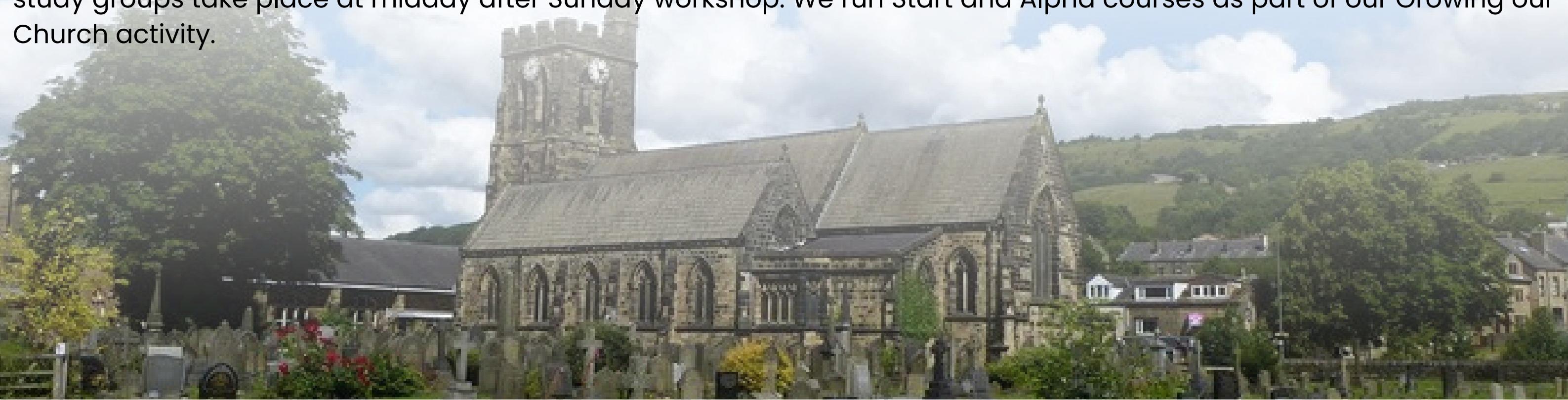


SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

There is already some overlap amongst the three churches in participation in home groups and prayer times. A new priest will be able to increase and enhance these combined opportunities.

In the Erringden Benefice, a thriving house group meets on alternate Monday mornings and is made up of people from several churches. In Lent this group closes and the members and others from the benefice join the Hebden Royd Churches Together Lent groups. A small prayer group meets weekly and is joined by people from Luddenden. St Michael's has a prayer tree for requests and candles to light in a space beside a side aisle. The prayer life of the church is an area that would benefit from encouragement and development.

For Luddenden, being a praying church is high on our list of priorities. Our prayer ministry team ensures someone is available for prayer after the service every Sunday, and we have a well-used WhatsApp Group to share prayer requests. A prayer group meets in church every Friday morning. A well-established and growing home group meets fortnightly on Mondays (and includes two people from Mytholmroyd), another meets on Thursdays and occasional study groups take place at midday after Sunday workshop. We run Start and Alpha courses as part of our Growing our Church activity.



CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

We are all committed to increasing the number of children, young people and young families in each of our churches. There is already some good groundwork.

St Michael's Angels is a flourishing weekly pre-school group, reaching out to members of the community and frequently recommended by health professionals. We have had families request baptisms as a result of their connection with St. Michael's Angels.

Mytholmroyd's three primary schools and the Calder Learning Trust through-school are all well-connected with the church. A small group of church members go into the primary schools to lead a dramatisation of a Bible story with the children taking part. The schools regularly visit the church as part of their RE curriculum or church members go into the schools to talk about prayer or other areas of church life.



CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

St John's hosts an annual two-day 'Footsteps' event based on the Scripture Union's Lifepath programme and organised by St Michael's with helpers from St John's, St Mary's and beyond. Up to 100 pupils from local primary schools come to St John's and learn about the 'lifepath' of the first vicar of St John's, Thomas Crowther, whose faith and actions changed the lives of children working in the mills.

In Luddenden, a focus on children and young people has been a major strand of our Growing our Church programme. As a result, we have an average of 12 children – and as many as 33 – taking part in our regular and occasional children's activities, mostly centred around Sunday worship.

We have close links with Luddenden CE school. Also in the parish are two community primary schools and a community special school. All schools attend St Mary's at various times – end of term, Harvest, Christmas etc. Our Open the Book team visits Luddenden CE School weekly and Midgley Primary School monthly.



THE CHURCH IN THE COMMUNITY

All three churches are committed to community support, in different ways.

In Mytholmroyd, the church, the Erringden Rooms and the car park host many community events, including weekly market stalls running alongside a church coffee morning. The hall is one of the venues for the Mytholmroyd Music Festival, and St Michael's Amateurs put on shows with a cast and crew drawn from the local community. There is a thriving junior section (S'MAJIC) which attracts youngsters from the local community. This church group has recently been nominated for The King's Award for Voluntary Service.

Different coffee mornings organised by church groups attract church members and non-church members and give further opportunities to offer pastoral support over a hot drink. Separate groups enable men and women to meet together and socialise. A group specifically for elderly members of the community meets once a month for a social gathering. Several church members are also involved in a number of community groups.

As a church we support Kimbilio – a charity working with street children in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Our Angels preschool group makes monthly contributions towards supporting other children and families.

Calder Food Support, a local food bank runs out of one of the rooms at St. Michael's Church Hall.

Kimbilio
Children's Sanctuary in the D.R. Congo



THE CHURCH IN THE COMMUNITY

St John's is at the heart of the Cragg Vale community and is used by a number of community groups. We hold many fundraising and social events to which all members of our community and beyond are invited. We also host and cater for two fell races a year. We work with the Cragg Vale Community Association (CVCA) on village events including the annual Christmas lantern parade and community lights switch on and Spa Sunday (a celebration based around the blessing of the local spa).

At the start of the cost of living crisis St John's, in conjunction with the CVCA started 'Cragg Vale Community Hubbub'. This provides a warm, welcoming space, for anyone who wants to come along and have a meal and a drink, chat with others and make use of the various activities available. We have confirmed through this initiative that loneliness and isolation is a bigger problem in our community than financial worries and we continue to do what we can to alleviate this.



THE CHURCH IN THE COMMUNITY

In Luddenden, St Mary's works closely with the Luddenden Conservation Society and the Luddenden Mayor's Fund. We hold an annual Great Luddenden Picnic and a Bonfire Night gathering, both of which are very much community events, and we support other community events that are run in our church or churchyard

A recent initiative is a monthly Coffee Drop-In which attracts a wide range of people from the local community into our building.

Our major community outreach project is the Pop In Shop in Kershaw. As a charity shop, it seeks to make available secondhand clothes and household items at a reasonable price. Its profits form a fund to assist members of the local community in times of need and to support local community projects. In 2024, the shop raised over £10,000 for the community.

Our other important community link is much further away. Our link with the parish of St Mary's Mmazame in the Diocese of Mara, Tanzania was forged in 2006.

We support them through prayer, fundraising and practical help with church building projects. A current project is the provision of monthly breakfasts held in their church. Several of our congregation have visited on a regular basis, making lifelong friends and seeing a lifelong impact from the visits.



PRACTICALITIES & CONNECTIONS

Administrative tasks at St Michael's and St John's are carried out mainly by the churchwardens and PCC secretaries whilst in vacancy and they would support the new incumbent with administration as required. A dedicated volunteer looks after bookings for the Church Hall, Erringden Room and other rooms at St Michael's. St Mary's has a Parish Administrator appointed by the PCC who receives a small honorarium.

The vicarage is situated in Mytholmroyd, around the mid-point of the three parishes. It's a four bedroom detached house, in a pleasant position with good views across the valley. It's close to public transport (bus and train), shops, primary and secondary schools, library and pubs and a 10-minute walk or short drive to St Michael's or a 10-minute drive to either St John's or St Mary's.



PRACTICALITIES & CONNECTIONS

The area is well served by good schools. There are Church of England primary schools in Luddenden and Hebden Bridge with other primary schools in Midgley, Luddendenfoot, Mytholmroyd and Hebden Bridge. There is also a special needs school in Luddenden. Secondary school provision is good with a high school in Mytholmroyd and others in nearby towns. In addition, Calderdale has a selective grammar school system with two grammar schools in Halifax. There is plenty of provision for 16 - 18 year olds in Calderdale and beyond.

The Grange Dene Centre in Mytholmroyd is home to a medical centre, a dentist, a pharmacy and a newsagents with a Post Office. There is a further small surgery (part of the same practice) and pharmacy on the Kershaw Estate in Luddenden. There are shops, pubs, cafes, restaurants and takeaways in all three parishes, with plenty more on offer in Sowerby Bridge, Halifax and Hebden Bridge.

The whole area benefits from excellent transport links via road and rail. Mytholmroyd is situated on the A646, the main road between Yorkshire and Lancashire. Good bus services link us to Halifax, Hebden Bridge and Huddersfield, while regular train services connect us with Bradford, Leeds, Manchester and beyond, and the M62 motorway provides connections with the M1 and M6.

WHAT WE CAN OFFER

We can offer you three thriving churches, in a beautiful part of the world, where God is already at work and just waiting for you to join in.

Committed laity in all three churches will help you find your feet and work with you on a shared vision and plans.

Welcoming congregations will take you into their hearts and introduce you to our marvellous local communities.

Children and young people who are hungry for more will receive you into their worship and their social activities.

You will find our buildings well-cared for and in good order, our social programmes interesting, our worship varied and our prayer life strong.

And you'll find three churches who are keen to continue working together and to develop our emerging "Luddenden/Erringden Network", where we seek to be three churches with one voice.

