Associate Priest – The Benefice of Pontefract
Role to be known as 'Priest Missioner'

I'm delighted that you have expressed your interest in this associate post in the Wakefield Episcopal Area to serve in the Benefice of Pontefract, which was established in May 2024 after a Pastoral Re-organisation to unite two former Benefices. The retirement of the recent Associate Priest has made possible this appointment of a full-time stipendiary priest with a creative new missional focus.

The Priest Missioner will work with the Vicar, the Vision Steering Group and the four PCCs and congregations to continue to realise the Vision for Mission created when the Benefice came together for their first Vision Day in October 2025. The successful candidate will have a substantive role in the continued development of the vision and will be encouraged to pioneer new initiatives that will enhance the work of the Benefice as the churches reach and serve their respective communities.

The Benefice of Pontefract consists of four parishes with five churches that comprises civic town centre, urban and rural contexts. The area has a strong mining heritage, hosting the Annual Miners Memorial Service as recently as 2026, and a significant farming community that relates well to the church. An annual agricultural highlight is the Plough Service in January and Pontefract town centre hosts the annual Liquorice Festival in July. The Benefice encompasses the Pontefract Racecourse and the original Haribo Factory, which continues to make confectionary including the world-famous Pontefract Cakes.

Pontefract has seen significant re-development over the past two decades with new build housing, such as that at the former Prince of Wales Colliery. There is a mix of wealth and poverty across the Benefice, with accommodation ranging from historic manor houses to post-war estates, social housing and new housing developments. The Benefice communities have a mix of families, working people and retirees. Transport links are excellent, with easy road access to the M62 and A1(M) and three train stations, one of which has a direct route to London. There are Eight Primary and Two Secondary schools, a college and numerous care/nursing homes across the Benefice.

St Giles sits in the Modern Catholic tradition with a strong choral element, while the other four churches are currently broadly Central Anglican, one of which was historically more Evangelical. Details of the pattern of services can be found in the Parish Profile and the full ministry of women, including sacramental worship, is welcomed in all the churches in the benefice. Nine key objectives have been identified for this Priest Missioner role, which are listed at the start of the Role Description, and I encourage you to prayerfully consider these priorities as you discern whether God may be calling you to this post.

Our vision in the Diocese of Leeds is to enable clergy and lay leaders to equip confident Christians to live and tell the good news of Jesus Christ, grow our churches and transform our communities. In appointing to this post, we are looking for a priest who is experienced

in evangelism and holistic mission, with a creative flair for reaching those outside or on the fringes of church and Christian faith. They should have a passion for nurturing the faith of Christians as lifelong disciples and followers of Jesus, being able to give effective challenge when required. In all this, they should have a pastoral and caring heart, supporting individuals and families through the joys and challenges of life with a desire to grow the church and transform communities with the love of Jesus.

There will be a need for the new associate priest to collaborate with the Vicar on:

- developing the missional focus across the Benefice, drawing on the strengths of the different parishes to serve a united vision while ensuring that their unique qualities are valued and upheld;
- growing the congregations spiritually, numerically, and in generosity;
- reaching out to the communities in mission and evangelism, working with others to prayerfully consider where to focus energy and develop new initiatives;
- being a visible presence and building connections and relationships across the Benefice;
- engaging and energising the congregations in their discipleship, developing and empowering lay leaders, and encouraging active participation in church life;
- leading on specific missional projects as agreed with the Incumbent.

The new Priest Missioner will find the Clergy, Lay Leaders, PCCs and other colleagues in the Benefice, Deanery and in the wider Episcopal Area to be friendly, enthusiastic and supportive in sharing the joys and challenges of mission and ministry.

Please be assured of my prayers throughout this appointment process. We look forward to hearing from you.

With every blessing
+Malcolm
Bishop of Wakefield
October 2026