

Vicar of the North Wakefield Benefice

The Benefice of North Wakefield is the largest benefice, in terms of population, in the Wakefield Deanery, and as such this post is a significant and important one within the Deanery and Archdeaconry. It comprises four parishes and four churches: St Paul's Alverthorpe, St Mary Magdalene's Outwood, St Peter's Stanley and St Anne's Wrenthorpe, in suburban Wakefield. The churches have prominent roles within their local communities and local people continue to look towards them to mark key events in their lives and the life of the community. The new vicar will be warmly welcomed.

The finances are well managed, and the churches work hard to pay as much share as possible year on year. Three of the church buildings are in good condition, with St Mary Magdalene's in the early stages of planning a potential major repair and refurbishment programme. Each church benefits from a variety of flexible spaces which facilitate social and community events.

Churchmanship ranges from Evangelical to Anglo Catholic and the sacramental ministry of women is welcomed in each church. Each church has a variety of services each month, which include Morning Prayer, Services of the Word, Holy Communion/Mass and Communion by Extension. Service times have recently changed to better accommodate shared working. There will be opportunities for the new vicar, in partnership with the Associate Priest and other clergy, LLMs and lay leaders, to consider different worship opportunities to draw in new people from the community. It is important that the new priest has a pastoral and caring heart, supporting the congregations and families through the joys and challenges of life.

The history of mining in the area is a continuing identifying factor in the benefice, although significant amounts of new housing and the benefice's excellent transport links and proximity to major employment centres have brought in large numbers of young families and commuters. In particular, the City Fields housing development on the north and east side of Wakefield, which partly falls within Stanley parish, represents a huge opportunity for outreach and mission.

There are eighteen schools in the parish, and it will be important for the new Vicar and Associate Priest to consider how best to maintain good relationships with these schools, as well as with the ten local care homes and Wakefield Hospice, which is in Stanley.

Our vision as the Diocese is about confident clergy equipping confident Christians to live and tell the good news of Jesus Christ. In appointing to this post, we are looking for someone who has a joyful and confident faith which has inspired a track record (however defined) of church growth.

There will be a need for the new vicar to focus on

- growing the congregations, spiritually, numerically, and in generosity,
- reaching out to the communities in mission and evangelism, especially to schools and to families,
- growing take up of occasional offices, and follow up from these,
- being a unifying presence across the benefice,
- engaging and energising the congregations, developing and empowering lay leaders, and encouraging active participation in church life,

- balancing traditional and more creative approaches to worship and liturgy, so that St Paul's, St Mary Magdalene's, St Peter's and St Anne's are places where everyone feels welcomed and loved.

The new Vicar will find colleagues in the deanery and in the wider episcopal area to be friendly, enthusiastic and supportive in sharing the joys and challenges of ministry.

+Nicholas
Bishop of Leeds
May 2025