

Come and Join Us



East Upper Holme Valley Benefice

Introduction and history

Holy Trinity, Hepworth, St. Thomas, Thurstonland and Christ Church, New Mill, were, until recently part of a team of seven churches served by three clergy. Now, with one clergy member remaining, the team has been dissolved and the seven churches divided into Upper Holme Valley East and West Benefices. This post is for the East Benefice. Each of the three churches of the East Benefice has its own unique identity which it is keen to maintain whilst working collaboratively to make this new Benefice work well.

When you have read this brochure, come and have a look and marvel at all the green space there is in the Holme Valley to enjoy!

Our Next Incumbent - Priest Qualities

It is considered essential by everyone in the three parishes that we have a new parish priest. We are happy to continue with the practice of sharing that priest.

Ideally, any new incumbent would: embrace living in a rural community, have a friendly, outgoing and enthusiastic personality with the ability to engage with all ages (especially children and young families), can deliver a sermon in a meaningful way and has a good sense of humour.

The following additional qualities are also important to us. We are looking for a priest who...

- would be able to lead us in worship and provide spiritual and pastoral care and comfort, not only to the regular congregation but to all members of the church family and the wider community;
- would help us to encourage families with children to return to the church and engage with other events which appeal to children and young people;
- would be active and visible in the community and happy to participate in community events;
- would chair meetings of the PCC and offer guidance as required;
- have an interest in promoting musical content during worship and in other areas of church life;
- be willing to encourage and assist us in the redevelopment of our church facilities.

What We Can Offer

- A warm welcome
- Our full co-operation and support
- Our prayers
- Our help in running the parishes
- Our local knowledge
- A church family who are welcoming and have a willingness to try new ideas.
- Housing for the incumbent

Holy Trinity Hepworth



Our church is situated in Hepworth, a hill-top village on the Pennines approximately 2 miles from Holmfirth. Our parish includes the neighbouring villages of Jackson Bridge and Scholes. The surrounding area comprises farmland and moorland and is good walking country. Hepworth church was consecrated in 1863 and was re-ordered in 2000 when a kitchen, toilet and meeting room were added. There are plans to build a ramp to make the building accessible for which money is currently being raised. We are a local re-cycling centre. We have a good sound system though central heating leaves something to be desired. For the past 20 years the church has been open every day to visitors. The local village hall is owned by the Diocese but is run by a separate community association and the church has free use of the hall when required.

Communications across the village are via the monthly church newsletter, by the village magazine or through the village and church Facebook pages. The church has an up-to-date website (hepworthchurch.org.uk) and uses a sum up machine for fundraising and donations.

What is our mission? Hepworth Church aims to help members to become better disciples and to encourage the growth of everyone within our community in their human potential by sharing the good news of the gospel in what we say and do, so as to make the world a better place and help forward the kingdom of God.

Hepworth Church is an intrinsic part of the local community which is very supportive of us; for example a member of the community works on our fundraising team, whilst other members of the village help us in the churchyard. Traditionally our incumbent leads the village at the annual Hepworth Feast, a walk around the local villages with the brass band, and will lead the public sing on Christmas Eve outside the local pub. However we acknowledge that we are an ageing congregation and whilst members of the village support our fund raising events, they do not come to Sunday church and we need help to reach out to them. We don't pretend we are a perfect church. We don't have a formal pastoral team, though as individuals we might well visit the sick. We have not had any recent laity training but we want to improve.



Worship and Activities

Holy Communion is currently held at 10am in shared worship on Sunday and we hold a Crafty Church, which we describe as 'a different way of doing church' with activities for children and families, on a Sunday afternoon approximately once each month. On Good Friday we hold a 'Drop In' at the village hall, which attracted 25 children this year plus many adults all making Holy Week crafts and enjoying refreshments.



Since the pandemic we have worked closely with two neighbouring parishes, sharing worship each week and together have established in Holmfirth affordable lunches each Thursday (which attract many people who live alone), a Parent and Baby Group as a response to local need, and some members take part in a Parish Reading group each month. Locally we have an active Mothers' Union, until recently we held a Soup for the Soul discussion group and each month we held a Coffee Cake and Chat morning, primarily aimed at people who live alone. The local school and play group visit church and the school hold some services each year; one of our churchwardens works closely with school and our former incumbent was a school governor and regularly took assemblies.

Our fund raising team raised about £9000 last year with the following events: Quiz Night, Christmas Exhibition, Big Breakfast, Fashion Show, Christmas Market, Garden Party and an Afternoon Tea.



Christ Church New Mill



Worship is central to our life together at Christ Church, New Mill. We embrace both traditional and contemporary liturgies, supported by a gifted organist, RSCM-affiliated choir, and worship band. Music plays an important part of our worship. Our weekly services include Family Eucharist, Matins (BCP), All-Age Worship, Sung Communion, and a midweek Eucharist. Junior Church meets regularly, and services are live-streamed for those at home. We celebrate the church year with additional services and occasional sung evensongs.

Built in 1831, our historic “Waterloo” church has been modernised to be fully accessible, with a lift and flexible upstairs space. We hold an A Rocha Eco Church Silver Award and are energetically pursuing net zero, having recently installed solar panels. We are close to turning on our new innovative heating system, for which we are a diocesan “demonstrator church”. Since 2015, our large Community Garden has played a dynamic part in our ministry with its fruit and vegetable beds, wild spaces, pond, orchard, stage, and shelter. It has provided a space for many memorable events including worship and reflection, forest school, bonfire nights, and community performances.

We maintain an online presence via our website <https://newmillchurch.org.uk/>, Facebook and YouTube. We produce a monthly magazine. Events are also promoted via village noticeboards.

Our active groups include...

- A regular Bible Study group and Advent and Lent courses.
- Choir/Worship Band: weekly rehearsals
- Faith on Friday: monthly fellowship and activities
- Reading and Craft Groups
- Monthly lunches and afternoon teas



Community Garden

Gifts are nurtured across the congregation—from leading worship to pastoral care, fundraising, and creative ministry. Women play a full and equal role in all aspects of church life.

What is our Mission?

Our mission is to be a church where all are welcome and all belong. We value each other's gifts and commit to living the gospel in our parish and beyond. Called to worship, question, and grow, we seek to deepen our faith in Christ through thoughtful worship and open exploration, enriched by beautiful music. We want our faith to be active, expressed through service, care, and encouragement within our church family and the wider community.

Examples of our community engagement...

- Annual Remembrance Service with 200+ attendees
- Christingle, Nativity, Carol, and Mothering Sunday services
- Concerts featuring choirs, orchestras, and soloists
- Fundraisers: Christmas market, wine tastings, Raffles
- Afternoon teas for the elderly and bereaved
- Partnerships with local schools and festivals
- Outreach events like our Festival of Light and Walking Nativity



Generosity & Giving

We are a Fairtrade church supporting PLAN child sponsorship, the Children's Society, our link diocese in Tanzania, and the Welcome Centre Food Bank. Over £250,000 has been raised in recent years to improve our building and enhance worship.

Opportunities & Challenges

We are rebuilding our children's ministry post-Covid, with a slowly growing Junior Church. Developing our ministry among children and young people is our first priority. Continuing our eco journey and deepening community engagement remain other key priorities.



St Thomas' Church, Thurstonland



Introduction

St Thomas is a Community Church serving the villages of Thurstonland and Stocksmoor. It is a Victorian Arts & Crafts building in the Gothic Revival style, is Grade II listed with an iconic spire, is situated in a Conservation Area and still retains many of its original features. The Church building is surrounded by a closed churchyard and burial ground containing several Commonwealth war graves, with a memorial lawn used for the burial of ashes and to provide a green tranquil area outside the church.

Basic Information

The parish has a maintenance plan ensuring that regular checks are made and issues dealt with as they arise. The east window (stained glass designed by William Wailes and installed when the church was built in 1870) was fully renovated in the summer 2025 at a cost of circa £120,000. The church is fully accessible by steps at the main entrance and via a disabled access ramp to the rear (side) door. The area at the rear of the nave has been modified to include a meeting room with kitchen and toilet facilities which are in need of upgrade. This is the PCC's next project to improve rental potential and help secure the sustainability of the building.

The Parish News is produced every 2 months and circulated around the parish via email and with hard copies available. Currently, St Thomas does not have a dedicated website but information is available on line via the "achurchnearyou" website and FaceBook "St Thomas Parish Church Thurstonland".

Our Community and Church Life

The church is a focal point in the community holding weekly services of worship. Weddings, funerals, baptisms etc. are held in the church and the church is used by the local school for assemblies, concerts, etc. as they have no school hall. Church festivals such as Mothering Sunday, a family event on Good Friday, the Dedication of Flowers on Easter Day, a Remembrance Day Service, Harvest Thanksgiving, a tree lighting service on Advent Sunday, Christingle and Christmas Services are all celebrated. These events are well supported by the local community. However, the main issue which faces the church at present is the lack of engagement with families and young people.

The church supports the Welcome Centre (a local food bank), Christian Aid, Macmillan Cancer Support & the Children's Society together with the current Team link Diocese of Kagwa in Tanzania. Thurstonland Endowed First School is part of The Greenhills Federation which includes the first schools from the villages of Thurstonland, Farnley Tyas & Upper Denby. There are currently 60 children registered at the school. There are good links between the church and the school with our previous incumbent having involvement on a regular basis.

Worship and Worshippers

The present monthly pattern of Sunday worship includes a Family Service, a BCP Holy Communion Service and 2 Family Holy Communion Services. The 4th and 5th Sundays are Joint Holy Communion Services with Christ Church, New Mill, on a rota basis. Communion is also available at home for parishioners who are unable to attend church services.

We have an aging congregation for most services i.e. over 60, except for the Family Services when young families also attend. Very few of our congregation live outside the parish and, whilst our services are generally traditional in nature, the congregation are open to all styles of service and welcome change and variety.

Church Based Organisations & Groups

We have a thriving Mothers' Union with 20 members who meet once a month. There is a monthly church Coffee Morning and a Community Lunch Club - changing to an Afternoon Tea in August and December (started with £100 of See money from the Bishop of Wakefield in December 2013.) The Festive Afternoon Tea is by invitation to the older, ailing or lonely members of the community and is funded by the profit from the lunches. The church has a varied social life and this is helped by our fundraising events (e.g. Wine tasting evenings/ Christmas Market/Village Gala, etc) in addition to the normal day to day meetings.

Ministry & Mission

The mission at St Thomas is to provide a safe, welcoming and inclusive place of worship together with nurturing spiritual and pastoral care to all those in our community. We would welcome the arrival of a new incumbent with fresh ideas, who can engage with children and families and relate to the problems facing the elderly.

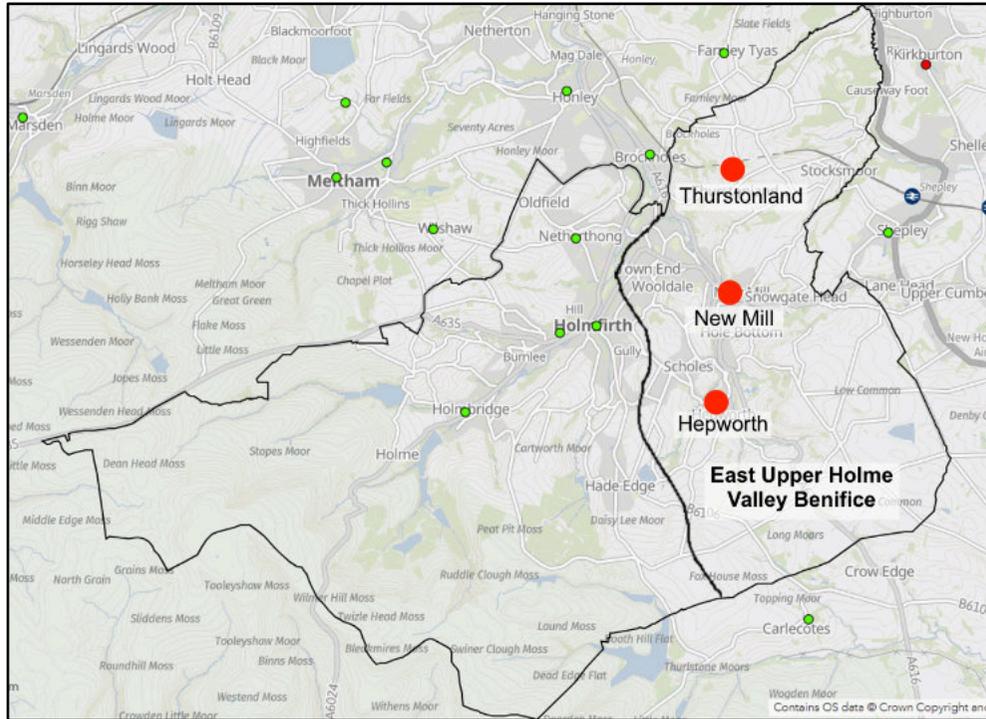
Finance, Stewardship & Sustainability

Over recent years we have not held a formal stewardship campaign. We have been reluctant to do so as we are mindful not to ask too much of our community as they have been very generous in their support for our appeal to raise the funds to restore the east window. We are, however, now looking to launch a "Friends of St Thomas" scheme and to begin to raise funds for the improvement of the church facilities. There are a good number of regular planned givers, donating directly into the bank, which helps considerably with financial planning. Others give through our Service collections and our sited collection boxes. We also have a card reader to take donations & payments and we ensure that we maximise the Gift Aid claimable on donations.



Left to right: Festive Afternoon tea, Nativity, Celebratory Service, Church in winter

The Benefice of the Upper Holme Valley East



The Benefice of the Upper Holme Valley East is situated between Huddersfield to the north and Sheffield to the south, approximately an hour from Leeds and within easy reach of Manchester Airport, York, and the M1 and the M62.

The Vicarage, New Mill



The vicarage was originally the home of the New Mill baker, and was acquired by the diocese in the late 1970s. Downstairs there is an office, toilet, cloakroom, roomy hall, kitchen, utility room, dining room and lounge. A sun room gives access directly to the rear garden with well-maintained lawns and beds. Upstairs there are five large bedrooms, a toilet and bath room with bath and shower. There is storage in the loft. To the front there are gardens and a large driveway with a garage with space for one car. The property is fenced and has security lighting and has been a well-loved family home for many years.