

BENEFICE OF THIRSK - PROFILE

A letter from the Bishop of Whitby



This is a great opportunity for ministry! Thirsk is a wonderfully attractive market town which together with its surrounding villages encapsulates the spirit and character of North Yorkshire. It is an important centre for the agricultural economy over a wide area, as well as being the home to a significant amount of light industry.

The benefice is now vacant following the 13-year ministry of a priest who was for much of that time also Rural Dean, and who has now moved on to a chaplaincy post in another diocese. Building on what has been achieved in these past years, there is potential for new initiatives to be taken alongside the traditional base of market-town and village church life.

The Church of England's ministry and mission in the town and its environs are shared between the benefice of Thirsk and other parishes, notably Sowerby on the south side and the 'Hillside' parishes in the rising moorland to the east. Thirsk and Northallerton are the two market towns in the Deanery of Mowbray and complement each other in many ways.

The coherence of the Deanery of Mowbray is very strong and is reinforced by its covenant with the Methodist circuit. We shall expect the new Rector of Thirsk to be thoroughly committed to this and to take a full part in promoting the distinctive contribution that deanery life can make to mission and strategy.

The variety found within the parishes is an important factor for anyone considering ministry here to consider. Thirsk is rated on the 37th percentile of the national scale of multiple deprivation: life expectancy is better than the national average, but there is a higher-than-average incidence of child and working-age poverty. An important aspect of the churches' role in living and proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ is to be centres of respectful welcome to residents and visitors, and an instrument of social coherence within the communities.

The benefice has welcomed the ministry of ordained men and women and will wish to see that pattern continue. There is an excellent core of dedicated people who are ready to work with a new Rector to see the life of God's church locally move into its next phase. With the people of the parishes and Archdeacon Sam, I pray that we may be led to meet the priest who is God's choice for Thirsk, South Kilvington, Sandhutton and Carlton Miniott.

+ Paul Whitty

Thirsk Benefice comprises four churches and centres around St Mary's church in Thirsk with St. Wilfrid's church in South Kilvington, St Lawrence's church in Carlton Miniott and St Leonard's church in Sandhutton, all within four miles of Thirsk. The five bedroom Rectory stands behind St Mary's in the centre of Thirsk and is a large, modern, detached family house, built approximately twenty years ago, with a double garage, parking space to the front and manageable garden to the rear.

Thirsk is a medieval market town, with a twice weekly market, situated in the Vale of Mowbray, midway between The North Yorkshire Moors National Park to the east and The Yorkshire Dales National Park to the west. Each of these parks may be accessed within thirty minutes driving time. There are excellent road and rail links, with frequent bus/coach services to all parts of the country, and a railway station on the East Coast Main Line between London and Scotland. The city of York and larger towns of Harrogate, Darlington, Middlesbrough and Stockton are all within easy commuting distance. Nearby market towns of Northallerton, Ripon and Helmsley are fifteen to twenty minutes away.

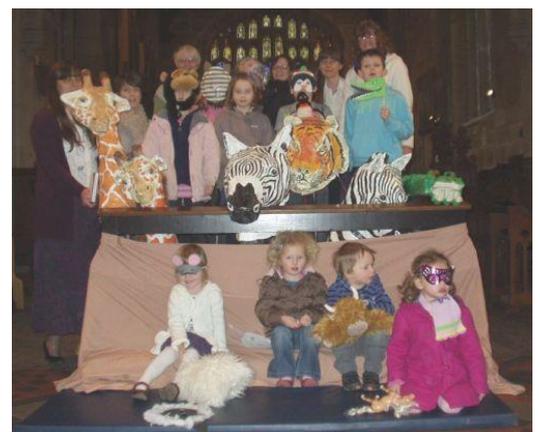
Thirsk is well served by two major supermarkets on the edge of the town and a variety of individual shops in the ancient cobbled Market Place. The town is well known for its Racecourse and is now internationally famous as "The Home of the Vet", thanks to local veterinary surgeon Alf Wight who wrote as James Herriot, giving rise to the long running TV series "All Creatures Great and Small" and a number of major films. "The World of James Herriot" just along the street from St. Mary's is an award winning tourist attraction, drawing visitors from around the world.



The benefice has an increasing **population** of 6,500 (Thirsk 5,000; Carlton Miniott 1,000; Sandhutton 260; South Kilvington 220) with new housing being built across the benefice. The town has a Community Primary School with Nursery Unit, and a Secondary School and 6th Form College. There is also a Community Primary School in Carlton Miniott and a Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School in South Kilvington where the Rector is a Governor. St Mary's Ark Club Leader regularly visits all the Primary schools to lead worship. We have a developing relationship with "Thirsk Clock" (pictured left during the

Archbishop's pilgrimage earlier this year) which offers a variety of support services and opportunities for the youth of Thirsk and surrounding areas.

Our vision is of parishes with a variety of worship, central in churchmanship, serving local needs and being open to working more closely together. We are fortunate in having the active support of several retired clergy and two Readers. We minister to two residential homes and members of the laity provide Home Communion as necessary across the benefice. Thirsk has, until a few years ago, been a training parish and this Benefice has the potential to continue this under the direction of a rector with the necessary experience and skills.



We seek a rector who

- can identify and minister to the needs of a wide cross-section of this semi-rural community
- has good organisational and communication skills
- appreciates the varied patterns of worship within the four churches
- is willing to present new ideas for development and cooperation
- is keen to assess ways in which work with children and young people can be developed
- is able to encourage and further our work of mission in the town, villages and far beyond
- can help us to better know God and serve Him and our world to the best of our ability

Below please find a simplified chart of current service patterns across the benefice.

Further information is contained on St. Mary's website -

www.stmaryschurchthirsk.org.uk

(also visit "A Church Near You" for details of other churches)

May 2016

Current pattern of Sunday services

	St Lawrence Carlton Miniott	St Leonard Sandhutton	St Mary Thirsk	St Wilfrid South Kilvington
Week 1	Holy Communion 10.30 am	Holy Communion 9.15 am	Holy Communion 8.00 am 10.15am	Holy Communion 9.00 am B.C.P.
Week 2	Morning Prayer 10.30 am	Holy Communion 9.15 am	All Age Worship 10.15 am Non Eucharist	Holy Communion 9.00 am B.C.P.
Week 3	Holy Communion 10.30 am	Holy Communion 9.15 am	Holy Communion 8.00 am 10.15am	Holy Communion 9.00 am B.C.P.
Week 4	COMBINED Morning Worship Alternating between the 2 Churches		Holy Communion 10.15 am	Holy Communion 9.00 am B.C.P.
Week 5	<i>Benefice Service at St Mary's Thirsk</i>		Holy Communion 8.00 am Benefice Service 10.15 am	Holy Communion 9.00 am B.C.P.

ST MARY'S CHURCH, THIRSK

THE CHURCH

St. Mary's is a Grade One Listed building dating from the late 15th century and attracts a large number of visitors from all around the world. Our Ministry of Welcome is an important feature of our focus and outreach.

The congregation is made up of mainly middle aged and retired with a handful of young families. The children's "Ark Club" (Sunday School) meets in the crypt during the 10.15am Sunday service but takes a leading role in the monthly "All Age Worship" services. A younger group - "Little Ark Club" - for pre-school children and their carers - is held in church on Tuesday mornings .

Average attendance at Sunday services during 2015 was 62 adults and 5 children. There is also a mid week Eucharistic service on Thursday mornings with an average attendance of 5 and, within the community, St Mary's is responsible for a monthly Eucharistic service at one of the local nursing homes which can draw 20 residents. In 2015 the number of Occasional Offices was: Baptism – 27; Wedding – 4; Funeral – 21. Electoral Roll numbers in 2015 were 126. There are currently 6 weddings booked for 2016 and 4 for 2017.



Churchmanship is central, using Common Worship forms of service; vestments are alb and chasuble. We have strong support from the 5 'actively retired' clergy and two Readers who take services across the benefice. There is a lot of input from the laity with regard to readings, intercessions and Home Communion.

St. Mary's is a member of Churches Together (Thirsk District) along with the other denominations in Thirsk - Methodist; Roman Catholic; Society of Friends and an independent "Family Life Church". There is a formal covenant between the Anglican Deanery of Mowbray and the local Northallerton Methodist Circuit.

Inter-church relationships are well maintained through the local Christian Aid Group and activities such as shared events during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, a Good Friday Walk of Witness; The Women's World Day of Prayer and joint Easter celebrations.

There is an informal monthly ladies' group, St Mary's Women's Fellowship, with a membership of about 20 and women from St Mary's attend Mothers' Union meetings in conjunction with St Oswald's in Sowerby – a neighbouring parish but in a different benefice. We have an informal choir of about 20 who prepare special pieces once a month.

FINANCE

We are currently reviewing our financial situation under the Archbishop of York's initiative "Generous Churches – Making and Nurturing Disciples". The annual budget is produced for approval at the July PCC meeting, enabling us to make a considered and affordable Freewill offer to the Diocese for the year ahead. However, there are concerns about the long-term financial situation at St. Mary's. Core costs amount to £51,200 per annum; core income amounts to £33,800 and is currently falling. The shortfall of £1,450 per month is made up by the extraordinary efforts of the Fundraising and Social Committees and through our special events and exhibitions aimed at tourists and visitors as well as the local community.

PARISH LIFE

An important feature of our focus and outreach is our Ministry of Welcome where we aim to have an open church, thanks to a dedicated team of "Welcomers", daily from 10am to 4pm between April and October. Part of this outreach is a series of special activities/exhibitions to encourage locals and visitors into this magnificent building. The church is used for a variety of concerts (sacred and secular) and we encourage the use of the building by outside

agencies – schools, amateur and professional drama and music groups etc. St. Mary’s has its own active fundraising and social committees, using both the church and other community facilities. We aim to play a full part in the life and work of this community.

ST WILFRID’S PARISH CHURCH, SOUTH KILVINGTON

South Kilvington is situated approximately 2 miles from the market town of Thirsk and has a population of approximately 220. With good links to the A19 and A1, the village has many residents who commute to work but it also has a high percentage of retired residents.

The Church was built in its present form during the 13th century and is situated in the centre of the village, north of the village green. One of the Church’s rectors was W. T. Kingsley who served for 59 years and is reputed to be the longest serving rector in the country. He considerably embellished the church by carving an altar rail, a set of pews and a Bishop’s chair.



St Wilfrid’s is currently undergoing extensive restoration with the support of a very significant HLF grant which it is hoped will sustain it for the next 100 years. For many years the Church has paid in full its contribution to the Diocese of York; in fact it has increased its contribution above the rate of inflation in the last few years. It is hoped that, after the restoration, the Church can better provide hall facilities for the village’s social groups.

SOUTH KILVINGTON CE (VC) PRIMARY SCHOOL

South Kilvington CE School currently has 88 pupils in four classes. Although we are located in South Kilvington village and parish, we are also the nearest Church of England school for families living in the Thirsk parish. 80% of our pupils live in Thirsk.

We are a small, welcoming school with a warm family atmosphere. Our Christian foundation remains at the heart of our mission statement and underpins our approach to relationships and behaviour in school. The caring nature of the school is frequently cited by parents as a main reason for choosing the school and was acknowledged as strength in our last two SIAMS reports.

The children, staff and governors are excited about the prospect of a new rector. Our ideal rector would be:

- someone who enjoys coming to lead our collective worship regularly and is good at telling stories;
- helps us when we visit St Wilfrid’s and St Mary’s to learn about the church or hold services;
- would like to come into school and get to know us;
- is keen to take an active role on the school’s governing body;
- Will involve the school in planning events for the Thirsk benefice.

You can find out more on our website:
www.southkilvingtonschool.co.uk

There is also a Church of England School in the village with a capacity for 88 pupils and a waiting list. The School is rated Good by OfSTED and SIAMS. Also within the village are a pub, a garage and a woman’s hair & beauty salon.

The Holy Communion service each Sunday at 9am follows the Book of Common Prayer. The congregation have expressed a wish for this to continue and to continue to use the readings (Collects Epistles and Gospels) from the Prayer Book. The Church has an electoral roll of 26 with an average attendance of 12 at Holy Communion.



ST LAWRENCE'S CHURCH, CARLTON MINIOTT

St Lawrence's Church was re-built in 1895-96 to a design by Charles Hodgson Fowler, a student of Pugin. It is considered to be a fine, unaltered example of Hodgson Fowler's work incorporating a rare example of a decorative scheme on the chancel ceiling, receiving Grade 2 listing in 2005. In recent years the Church has been re-roofed and restored internally following an Appeal and with grant support from English Heritage and other grant providers.



Plans are currently in place to re-develop the West End of the Church to enable it to be used by the wider community and to provide improved catering facilities. The Church is open at various times throughout the year for visitors.

Our congregation is small and made up mainly of retired people with average weekly attendance of 14 and an electoral roll in 2015 of 22. In 2015 there were 3 baptisms and 5 funerals. The Church consistently pays its Freewill Offer in full.

Churchmanship is central with a broad range of services centred on Common Worship but with the occasional use of BCP. A joint service is held monthly with the neighbouring St Leonard's Church in Sandhutton which is led by members of our respective congregations. The Church is well supported by the local community and the community primary school in the village (approximately 190 pupils) and we aim to play a full part in the life of both the village and wider community.

ST LEONARD'S CHURCH, SANDHUTTON

The present church was built in 1875, replacing churches built on the site from the 13th century. Beautiful stained glass windows over the altar depicting Faith, Love and Hope were made by J Knowles and Sons.

Sand Hutton is a small village located about 3 miles from Thirsk, with a population of around 260. According to the 2011 census, those who live here are an entrepreneurial bunch with a larger than average concentration of self-employed residents.

Our congregation is small but enthusiastic and we are all very keen to grow the church and to develop our own faith. We are open-minded about trying new forms of worship to complement our existing services and a few years ago we began holding a more informal monthly lay-led service jointly with St Lawrence's, Carlton Miniott.



To provide a visible Christian presence, we ensure that services are held weekly, along with special services for Christmas, Easter, Harvest and other occasions. Over the last couple of years we have held some very successful special occasion services. In 2014, we held a special Remembrance Day service to mark the 100th anniversary of WW1 which was very well received. Our Christmas Carol Service involves as many villagers as possible.

The congregation and the PCC feel very strongly that we have a role in providing worshipping opportunities for the village and that the church should be one of the focal points for village life. We are never going to be a big church - it's a small village - but we want to be a healthy church. We have a strong Christian fellowship.

When the church building had some structural problems a few years ago, many in our village rallied round to support fundraising events, resulting in rebuilding the bell tower, rewiring, repointing, redecorating, maintaining and cleaning the church and church grounds. We would like to capitalise on the goodwill in the village and grow our congregation. We hold an open morning at Easter when we welcome people to come into church to see the flowers and have coffee. We would like the village to really feel that St Leonard's is their church so we try to hold events that are not too intimidating to the unchurched.

We have many fund-raising events which are also village social occasions, some joint events with the Village Hall committee. The Village Hall and the Kings Arms also host fundraising events for St Leonard's including quizzes and Ladies Lunches.

Thank you for reading our Parish Profile

If you would like to have an informal conversation about this post, please contact the Bishop of Whitby, the Rt Revd Paul Ferguson (01642 593273), or the Archdeacon of Cleveland, the Ven Samantha Rushton (01642 706095).

The Archbishop of York is Patron and the Bishop of Whitby acts on his behalf in making the appointment.

The post is open to priests of the Church of England or a church in full communion with it. Appointment is subject to a satisfactory Enhanced DBS disclosure.



You are invited to use the standard Church of England application form which may be downloaded at

https://www.churchofengland.org/media/2288914/application_form.doc

and completed forms should be sent to the Bishop of Whitby's PA, Mrs Julie Elphee julie.elphee@yorkdiocese.org / 21 Thornton Road, Stainton, Middlesbrough TS8 9DS / 01642 593273.

The closing date for applications is 21 September 2016 and Interviews will be held on 5 October 2016.