



# Mitre Benefice Profile

**Who We Are**



At the MB, we believe we are called to Love God, Love each Other and Love our Neighbour. We believe in the Church gathered and scattered. We celebrate the big gatherings, the small gatherings and also the scattered: House Groups and anywhere 2 or 3 can meet together before God. The MB is relational: vertically to God and horizontally to one another. We love 'one anothering'!

**“to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ,  
and to love one another as He commanded us”**

— 1 JOHN 3:23

For us, church isn't a building, although we meet in several buildings which look fairly traditional from the outside but, much like the Tardis, are so much more on the inside. The heartbeat of the MB is to see people transformed by Christ, knowing Him and living that reality every day.





## The Journey So Far

Since 2013, when the Bishop of Norwich kindly invited HTB to partner with the Diocese to plant a church in Norwich, God has enabled the MB to grow. The opportunity and privilege to be part of this revitalisation in Norwich has breathed new life into it and enabled the church to grow to what it is today. Since this time, we have played a significant role in leading and encouraging regular Alpha courses, church planting and revitalisation across the Diocese through a variety of methods:

- Mission Partnership with the neighbouring Earlham parish
- The revitalisation of SHED church in Costessey
- Enabling & supporting house churches through The Garden Network

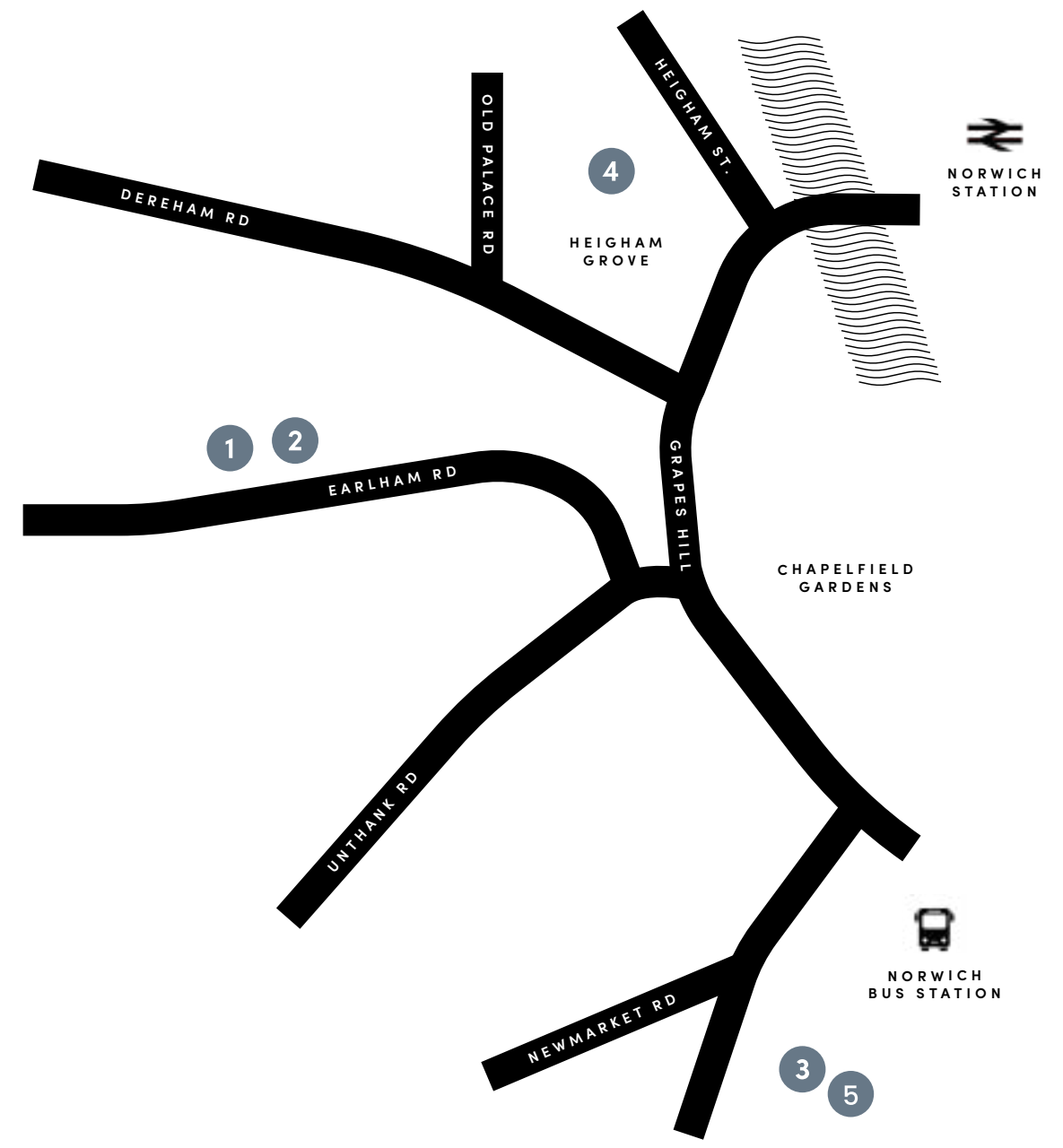
From the initial single site at St Thomas, we have grown to three sites, with St Albans joining us in 2015 and St Barnabas in 2017, and a team of 4 clergy. Through 2023, we averaged 300-400 people each Sunday across our locations including 120 young people. Subscribers to our YouTube channel have increased 400% with 62,400 views and 10,000 watch hours during the year. Demographics of these figures reflect that 50% are under 34 years old and then 30% are 65+ years old. Our services have reached 15 countries engaging with the content worldwide.







- 1 **ST THOMAS**  
Earlham Rd, NR2 3RG
- 2 **MITRE & OFFICES**  
131 Earlham Rd, NR2 3RF
- 3 **ST ALBAN**  
Grove Walk, NR1 2QF
- 4 **ST BARNABAS**  
1 Russell St, NR2 4QT
- 5 **SANCTUARY COFFEE**  
Grove Walk, NR1 2QF







## **The Vision is Heaven**

In Norfolk as it is in Heaven. Seeing the Kingdom come house by house, street by street, village by village.





## The Mission is Love

Love God. Love Each Other. Love Our Neighbour. The command that fulfils the law and prophets. The discipleship journey running through everything we do.



## **The Vehicle is Church**

God's Plan A. There is no plan B!





## **The Mode is Gathered & Scattered**

The Temple and the House. Drawn in and sent out. Like a heart-pumping oxygenated blood around the body. We can say both “come and see” and “I’m coming to your house for tea”.



## **The Method is You**

We are the body of Christ. Everyone has a crucial part to play.





## **The Tools are in Your Hands**

Fish? Loaves? A Staff? Some Smooth Stones? His story teaches us to dream big with whatever He places in our hands.

## Who Are We Looking For

We are looking for a passionate, energetic and high-capacity curate to join the staff and clergy teams here at the MB. Specifically, the curate will be...

- ...a Christ-centred individual who is prayerful, deeply rooted in the scriptures, and open to the work and power of the Holy Spirit.
- ...a leader who is both a team-player and able to work unsupervised.
- ...passionate about releasing ministry and equipping others (both new and long-term Christians) to grow deeper in their faith and calling.
- ...an individual who has a vision and heart for inner-city estate ministry, while also ministering across the sites and services of the MB.
- ...a leader who is dedicated to serving and promoting the wider vision of the MB.
- ...committed to making and growing disciples.
- ...responsible, loyal and trustworthy.
- ...at home ministering in the power of the Spirit with an ability to lead across traditions.
- ...spiritually discerning and pastorally sensitive; an active and skilled listener.
- ...a person who enjoys being with others and exercising the gift of hospitality.
- ...committed to pursuing evangelism and social transformation through the mission of the church.
- ...a leader who is comfortable working within a dynamic and fast-paced working environment.
- ...a leader who is able, with appropriate oversight, to take the strategic lead for significant areas of responsibility within the ministry of the Church.
- ...someone who brings emotional intelligence and cohesion in a team environment.
- ...a secure, effective and stable leader within a fast-paced youthful team
- ...a clear and effective communicator.
- ...a lifelong learner, while also bringing their own gifts, skills and experience to the table.





# The Team



**Tom Eagles**  
Vicar



**Dave Hendra**  
Clergy



**Joanna Payne**  
Clergy



**Jason Baldry**  
Creative



**Bonnie Wilson**  
Youth



**Tim Henery**  
Sports Factory



**Blessing Chisanu**  
Clergy



**Dianna Timms**  
Lay Reader



**Rich Mills**  
Kids, Youth, Students, Young Adults



**Lucy Winn**  
PA & Administration



**Hugh Austen**  
Head Barista



**Claire Gibby**  
Sanctuary Coffee

## The History of the Mitre Benefice

### St Thomas

St Thomas Church was built in the 1880s by Ewan Christian for the new middle-class suburbs off the Earlham Road in Norwich. As a result of intensive bombardment in 1942, the St Thomas church was completely gutted with only the outer walls left standing. It took ten years to rebuild leaving us with a modern, light airy space in which to work. In 2012, the church had been declining for some years and could not afford its parish share with a small congregation of 30, no children and not many under the age of 40. Talks began between the Bishop of Norwich and HTB to explore the possibility of a church partnership and in March 2013, the Revd Ian Dyble was appointed as vicar.

The church quickly grew and a new Benefice was formed (The Mitre) with St Barnabas Church, Russell Street and St Alban, Grove Walk. St Alban Grove Walk built in 1937 and joined with the MB in 2015, is sited to the south of inner ring road. St Barnabas was consecrated in 1906 and joined the MB in 2017 and is sited on the estate to the north of the Dereham Road and west of the inner ring road. All 3 churches have been refurbished to provide open areas and moveable seating to make the most of the space available for church events.





### St Alban

St Alban church was reopened five years ago as part of the Bishop of Norwich's revitalisation of churches' vision. In partnership with St Thomas, the church building was reborn (after 6 years of non-use) as a space for worship, outreach and community engagement.

The Sunday service is 'The Four'. This service is a family and seeker-friendly service with the aim of the congregation being in God's lounge. There is rarely a typical Four service as it is known as a place to 'experiment' with a variety of services. There have been services led by the Youth and another was the Gospel according to Jazz (building on the jazz mornings held in the café).





## St Barnabas

Consecrated in 1906, the church is sited on an estate in an area of low employment and social deprivation and became part of the MB in 2017. The existing congregation of approximately 20 are, predominantly, late middle-aged and elderly. This congregation longs to love and reach out into their local area, and their passion and heart are evident in the warm welcome and family feel of the congregation, with firm friendships and mutual support happening outside the church building. The Sunday Communion follows the common teaching series within the Benefice, though has a more liturgical format involving both lay and ordained people. Currently, accompanying music mainly comprises Songs of Fellowship together with other contemporary songs using guitar and piano. In addition, mid-week activities include: a weekly prayer meeting and a traditional HC service.

Both before and since becoming part of the MB, St Barnabas reached out to the parishioners through family and youth outreach, connecting with the local schools and organisations and organising community fun days, all with varying success. Presently occurring are; Community Activity days with Sports Factory involvement; Noah's Boat (parents & toddlers); Café Shine (women's pamper and craft café) and Love your Neighbour Scheme participation. The adjacent building is rented out to the Prince's Trust (Parish Hall) and a Counselling Centre. This provides valuable income to the Church.

There has been some fruit from the work of the church through the years. One of the hurdles which comes up is the next step following these things, including looking hard at the style of church service on offer. The congregation has made some big changes since 2017 but questions remain about whether it could be a better fit for the un/de-churched from the local area. To accommodate the different needs it is envisaged that different services will be provided, using patterns and experience from other effective estates' ministry elsewhere in the country.

As we continue to rebuild as a church family, St Barnabas is to be the next priority of our church revitalising work.







## The Mission

### Groups

Across the MB, there are 20 House Groups, comprising a total of approx 200 members. Our vision for our groups is scattered people loving God and one another, seeing the Kingdom of Heaven break-in. We believe that House Groups provide opportunities for creating multiple discipleship pathways, encouraging people on their journey of faith and mobilising their gifts in different areas so that we can aim to function well as part of the body of Christ. With the wide catchment area of the church, we have people travelling from the surrounding villages as well as from the city itself and our groups provide everyone with a vehicle for them to experience the local church.

Group leaders discern the content and format of their sessions, often encouraging group members to lead regularly. Group leaders attend monthly drop-in sessions with a member of the clergy to share updates, ideas, challenges and prayer requests with one another. At the MB, we are passionate about seeing people's lives transformed by the power of the Gospel.



### Worship through Music

Here at the MB, we are passionate about the presence of God and encountering Him through worship and serving at all the church sites. Worship is at the core of everything we do, and sung worship plays a huge part of that. With a growing worship and production team over our sites, there is a range of worship styles: traditional, relaxed, folk and contemporary, to allow different members of our church family to connect best with God.

While we are currently unable to appoint a worship pastor, we have grown and released a core worship team of volunteers who oversee and run this aspect of our ministry across our sites and services.





## Students

We are delighted to have a significant number of university students who find their home with us. The two universities (UEA and NUA) have easy access to our churches. Our evening service tends to be the ones students choose to make their home, with discipleship happening through small groups, one-on-one investment and encouragement to get involved in serving the life of the church. The large number of students provides a pool of talent to support other ministries within the church including children's work, worship and sports work. Each year, we host a weekend away for students and young adults, a highlight of the year. We are extremely grateful for close links to UEA's CU, which many of our students attend and are actively involved. The CU has a big presence and seeks to make the Gospel known on campus. Many of our students have chosen to remain serving the church after graduating either as interns or permanent staff. Our heart is to see students find family, be built up in their faith and to be equipped to share the good news with those around them. The inclusion of vibrant student work within the church adds to the sense of life and mission within the whole congregation.

**@stnstudents**



## Youth

With the numbers of young people falling across the Church of England, we have a particular heart to see this national decline reversed. Our youth work is headed up by a part-time youth worker, and we long to see this paid position become a full-time role.

Our young people span our sites and services, and come together at the end of each week for Friday Night Youth (FNY). FNY attracts young people from both outside and inside the church, and we continue to see many of them coming to faith, baptised and growing in their hunger to share the good news of Jesus.

**@stnyouth**





## Kids

There is no such thing as 'The Junior Holy Spirit', and we have a heart at the MB to see children of all ages to find faith, and to be filled with and equipped by the Holy Spirit to live their lives for him. We are blessed to have a large and growing number of children call the MB their home (currently 70-80 children), and have children attend all of our sites and services.

We run children's church at each site during the core school terms, and regularly join together for all-age services. We believe that we have so much to learn from each other as we worship God together.

**@stn.kids**





## Sports Factory

The Sports Factory is a ministry team based at the MB that wants to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with the local community. The world of sports has an incredible ability to draw people in, break down barriers and create room for relationships to flourish. Therefore, we have a team that loves sports and are passionate about sharing their faith and we have found a number of ways to engage with the local community.

We go into schools and deliver PE lessons; we run lunch and after school clubs with an invite to our 'Legacy Holiday Club' during school holidays. These include a gospel message and an invitation to join us for celebration services in the church. Furthermore, we run social sports groups for adults to get involved with playing football, netball and more. This gives the opportunity for members of our church congregation to invite their friends along to play sports together with regular invitations to Alpha groups or sports quizzes in the church where the message can be shared again. Our vision is built on Paul's words in 1 Thessalonians 2:8: 'Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well'. Sports gives us the opportunity to meet people from all walks of life to share our lives and our faith in an exciting, brave and trusted way on a regular basis.

[@sportsfactoryuk](https://www.instagram.com/sportsfactoryuk)







## Love Your Neighbour

We have been part of Love Your Neighbour since spring 2020. At the heart of Love Your Neighbour is the aim for us to share the love of God with our neighbours particularly in practical ways. We have developed a wide range of projects involving 60 volunteers supported by a core team. We run some projects ourselves and others in partnership with other churches, local organisations and charities. A key aim for us is to build sustainable local networks with community partners.

Since 2016, the MB has worked closely with HMP Norwich leading services and Alpha there. Sustained work has developed from this amongst ex-offenders and an active involvement with the mentoring support offered by the local Community Chaplaincy.





## Global

We have partnered with Street Child in Sierra Leone since 2013 where we have helped fund the creation of 4 schools in extreme rural areas for over 400 children who would otherwise have no access to education, including providing a toilet block and drinking well. We have enjoyed sending a church team every year to run in the Street Child Sierra Leone Marathon and to visit the schools, encourage the pastors and teachers and raise funds. We have, as a church raised well over £50,000 over the last few years. In 2018 we welcome Street Child's lead coordinator for rural schools in Sierra Leone to visit England for the first time and stay with us and preach to us. The most recent street school was planted this year: "The St Thomas Norwich Primary School".

We have also worked with IJM and the Big Life fellowships in India, visiting and working with some of the churches led by Ben Francis. In 2019, we initiated, chaired and hosted the first gathering of agencies from across Norfolk, the Norfolk Modern Slavery Partnership, working collaboratively raising awareness of modern slavery and improving care of victims. We were invited to be part of the government's review of the Modern Slavery Act 2015. We have continued to fight against slavery through the development of "Sajil's Story" which we wrote and produced and arranged distribution of 30,000 copies in West Bengal through the Big Life Church. We have funded a 2nd street school for 40 children facing homelessness in Kolkata working to prevent children being trafficked. We have piloted and evaluated a 6 week small group series on modern slavery in House Groups. This was then adapted, translated into Bengali and adopted by Big Life for use in their church groups. Going forward, this work has been on hold whilst we wait and pray for the next steps.

We also have an informal partnership with a church in Haltern, Germany which began as a friendship between a member of each of the church congregations in 1991. They have participated in exchanges and supporting each other through existing and new friendships built through this connection ever since.

St Barnabas has recently started supporting financially, through prayer and letters, a project in Burundi called Restoration of Hope, which has connections with one of the STN church family. It works in taking children and young people off the street and supporting them through education along with a variety of other community projects.





### The Mitre

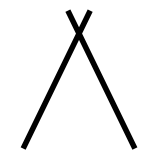
“The Mitre”, the aptly named public house and part of the community since 1867, stands next to St Thomas church. When vacant in 2016, the congregation realised a dream to buy and refurbish it. It has been transformed and the light has been let in. The community is welcome and experiences outrageous hospitality and the love of God, establishing a connection to the church. It offers valuable work experience to students with special needs. Also, it is a safe refuge for the homeless, ex offenders and those struggling where e.g. a hot drink and a shower can be found. The upper floor of the Mitre is used as the MB offices. The Mitre’s primary purpose is as part of the mission of the church.

[@mitrenorwich](https://www.mitrenorwich.org)  
[mitrenorwich.org](https://www.mitrenorwich.org)

**MITRE**

Our second missional space is Sanctuary Coffee. Housed within St Alban church, the vision of this endeavour is to create a space during the week into which we can welcome the local community. Serving great coffee and food, it operates alongside and facilitates the missional activities that take place inside the church, including Pilates, Zumba, Zumbini and Sanctuary Jazz.

[@sanctuarynorwich](https://www.sanctuarynorwich.org)  
[sanctuarynorwich.org](https://www.sanctuarynorwich.org)



**Sanctuary Coffee**



## Creative

Creativity is at the centre of everything we do – seeking creative excellence both within a church context but also further afield. We have a talented team of creatives producing high-quality web and print content, film and audio pieces and superb photography. We were privileged to receive the Premier Digital Award for ‘Best Church Website’ 3 years in a row and released our John Lewis Christmas advert parody video on YouTube, receiving over 50k views.

We seek to embody a spirit of simplicity and minimalism, resulting in clear communication, beautiful imagery and film. We pursue environmental gain through our actions, to live lightly on our planet and celebrate our city, community and countryside in our work.

An entrepreneurial passion runs through the team, looking to the future as to how we can use creativity to reach new people through our work. We have worked with multiple other churches on their creative endeavours including their web, film and IT structures. We also have the vision to create and operate high-spec coworking spaces in our buildings, to bring like-minded creatives into a new environment. The quality of these spaces upholds and strengthens our core brand, exhibiting excellence in what the church does – not mediocrity. Through sharing these spaces we seek to grow together in creativity, mission and faith. Throwing open the doors of the church in a new and diverse way.





## Local Community

### Norwich

The city of Norwich is an excellent place to live with a rich history as one of the most important medieval cities in Britain. The urban area of Norwich has a population of around 230,000. There is a thriving arts scene with theatres featuring West End productions, multi-screen cinemas and a large selection of bars, cafes and restaurants. The local football team, Norwich City FC is at present in the EFL Championship and there are many excellent sports facilities across the city. The city is located only a short drive from the beautiful, unspoilt Norfolk Coast with opportunities to enjoy wonderful sandy beaches, water sports and stunning coastal walks. The crime rate in Norwich is one of the lowest of any city in England and this contributes to it being an ideal place in which to bring up a family. There are excellent local primary and senior schools serving the area. It is a jewel in the East of England.

### The Vicarage

The vicarage is a large, detached, 4-bedroom house with private garden adjacent to St Barnabas church on Russell Street. It is within easy reach of the city on foot, and there are excellent public transport links.