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Reepham & Wensum Valley: Priest-in-Charge

Dear Friends in Christ,

Thank you for your interest in the post of priest-in-charge of Reepham & Wensum Valley. This letter supplements the information you will find in the parish profile, to give you some more background and diocesan context.

The Parishes and this role

There are, as you will see from the profile, eight churches in the Reepham & Wensum Valley. We are in the process of re-ordering the previous Reepham & Wensum benefice, together with its neighbour, the Heart of Norfolk benefice, to create three benefices of eight churches rather than two of twenty-four between them. When the larger benefices were created, both were Team Ministries with a Team Rector and Team Vicars. The financial pressures of the pandemic, however, led to the removal of the team vicar posts and our decision to create three benefices in which God could be praised, good relationships formed, and communities served under one incumbent. The previous curate of Reepham & Wensum is now the incumbent of the new benefice of Bawdeswell & District, so that neither it nor Heart of Norfolk are vacant. Good relationships persist between the parishes and the clergy of the two benefices work well together, something we are keen to ensure continues with the appointment to Reepham & Wensum Valley. The pastoral reorganisation just described has the support of all the parishes and is a practical reality. It is the Archdeacon's and my intention that once a priest-in-charge is appointed to Reepham & Wensum Valley, that person will be named in the Scheme as the first incumbent and become Rector.

The new benefice contains the market town of Reepham and Reepham High School. This is attended by students from within and beyond the benefice and attracts younger families to the area. Ministry to and with this group is a key aspect of this role. It is notable that newly retired people are also moving into the benefice and there is real potential for synergy between these groups, as well as a desire to reach out to these groups in their own right.

The reorganisation of the benefice and the two mission priorities outlined above are aligned with the Diocese of Norwich's vision and strategy, about which there is more in the following section.

The Diocese, vision and strategy

The Norwich Diocesan Vision is to be Transformed by Christ: Prayerful, Pastoral, Prophetic. You can find out more information about this on the diocesan website and I hope that the phrase use above (in which 'God can be praised, good relationships formed and communities served') offers some insight into how this might be worked out in the context of rural villages. You can find out more about the vision by visiting <https://www.dioceseofnorwich.org/about/vision/>.

The Diocese has embraced the national church's three strategic aims: to become a church of missionary disciples; to be a church where mixed ecology is the norm; and to be a church that is younger and more diverse. We are focusing on developing a younger and more diverse church, and, within the national six bold outcomes, to do so with a parish system revitalised for mission so that churches can reach and serve everyone in their community. For more on the national aims and outcomes, see <https://www.churchofengland.org/about/vision-and-strategy>. We are in the process of discerning the appropriate strategy which, by the grace of God, will help us to realise this vision across the Diocese in its varied geographies.

The Area, Archdeaconry and Deanery

The benefices fall within the coterminous episcopal Area and Archdeaconry of Lynn, and so under the day-to-day care of the Bishop of Lynn (The Rt Revd Dr Jane Steen) and the Archdeacon of Lynn (The Venerable Catherine Dobson). The benefice is in the Ingworth & Sparham deanery whose Rural Dean is The Revd Andrew Whitehead, Team Vicar in the Aylsham & District Team Ministry

There are 5 posts of incumbent status in the Deanery including 2 Team Vicars, and 1 Curate in Charge, along with 19 PTO clergy. In the benefice there are 2 Authorised Worship Assistants.

Attendance at Deanery Synod and Chapter is an expectation, and all diocesan clergy are encouraged to give some part of their time and energies to the wider life of the Diocese.

Housing

The accommodation provided is described in the profile. Questions about the house should be directed to the Archdeacon of Lynn.

Patronage

The patrons' right to present a candidate for the benefice to the Bishop of Norwich is currently suspended due to the pastoral reorganisation described above.

The closing date for applications is Friday 22nd August (9.00am) with interviews being held on Tuesday 30th September.

Thank you for reading this letter, the benefice profile and accompanying material. If you would like informal discussion before deciding whether to apply for this role, you are very welcome to be in touch by telephone or e-mail with me or with The Archdeacon of Lynn. We can be contacted via our PA, Mrs Ann Whittet by email at ann.whittet@dioceseofnorwich.org.

I hope that this has enabled you to be clearer as to whether God is calling you to explore this role and, if that is so, I look forward to meeting you.

Grace and peace,

Yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jane Steen', with a stylized flourish at the end.

The Rt Revd Dr Jane Steen
Bishop of Lynn