



Rector Designate for the newly created 10 Parish Benefice in South Norfolk and Breckland

To Serve the Parishes of Bressingham St John the Baptist,
Burston St Mary, Fersfield St Andrew, Gissing St Mary,
North Lopham St Nicholas, Roydon St Remigius,
Shelfanger All Saints, South Lopham St Andrew,
Tivetshall St Mary and St Margaret, Winfarthing St Mary.

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Welcome

Thank you for looking at our profile. It shows who we are, where we are coming from and our hope to discern what God may have in store for us.

Who we are

A geographically fan shaped benefice of 10 parishes in the south of the Norwich Diocese.

These parishes are villages of varying sizes; all see their Church as a vibrant part of the community, whether sited at the centre or on the outskirts and these parishes have long standing links together.

Schools

The six primary schools across the benefice feed into Diss High Academy. Two are VA, the others are community schools, but all enjoy good relations with their local church, as do pre-schools and uniformed groups where these exist. Churches are the preferred venue for festival services; the church schools hold regular worship in church.

Until March 2020, the church school in North Lopham welcomed regular visits by the Open the Book team. They have asked for visits to resume. There is a real opportunity to extend and encourage this work.

Are you

an inspirational, collaborative leader with a passion for Christian mission and outreach into the community, who will build on our present foundations and inspire us to move forward with vision.

If so, read on.

We need

a priest with enthusiasm for bringing the gospel message alive and inspiring Church members to share their own faith in Christ with others and to celebrate our Christian heritage, whilst not making all parishes the same, but enabling each to find its unique way of serving the wider community.

Like most benefices we face many challenges and are confident that everything in Christ becomes possible with the right leader.

What you might offer us and what we offer you



Our Vision

To enable people across our Team to come to know God and His unconditional love, as revealed through His Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ, with someone to help us develop our vision and unite us in our purpose, a leader to guide our further spiritual journey and enable us to reach out to others in our rural communities and spread the good news of the joy of knowing our loving God.

How we do this

- Ensuring a warm welcome to parishioners, community, visitors, young people and older folk
- Through our prayers, for them and with them
- By being a visible witness in our local parishes, practically involved in community events and projects
- Thereby embracing the Diocesan Vision to be **Prayerful, Pastoral** and **Prophetic** **Leading to Growth in Discipleship, Service and Numbers**

We aim to celebrate our Christian heritage, not making each parish the same, but enabling it to find its unique way of serving the wider community

We are looking for

The person who will help us achieve our Vision by:

- lively preaching and teaching, relevant to daily life
- being comfortable with Prayer Book and Common Worship
- praying, with us and for us
- encouraging and developing pastoral care across the team
- understanding the challenges of remote rural settings, including the upkeep of ancient buildings
- growing and encouraging links with families, schools and young people
- helping us to engage with the wider communities, sharing your own gifts
- working with us as we seek the best way forward for our benefice
- looking with fresh eyes to discern how we might do some things better while perhaps letting others go
- being ready to learn from others, having fun and enjoying the company of others

It is our natural instinct to display our parishes in a good light. Of course we have our share of challenges in the form of social issues and deprivation.

How we work together

The Ministry Team: The Rector and two Authorised Worship Assistants, with the help of the wonderful retired clergy, would all work together to deliver regular Sunday worship.

We would welcome re-establishing a planned programme of learning through Discover Groups, meeting in venues across the benefice.

We are blessed to have a number of retired clergy, including a retired bishop, who live in the benefice and offer invaluable support.

The Churchwardens of the ten parishes work well together and would continue to meet regularly.

Well-being of our clergy is a priority. We are passionate about ensuring they have the resources they need to deliver their ministry with regular time off to enjoy their home life, while developing as a person and a priest.

Safeguarding is vitally important and all the relevant policies are adopted by the parishes. We are committed to being safer parishes and aim to make our churches places where the value and dignity of every human being is affirmed, with special regard for the most vulnerable, the youngest, the elderly and those with special needs or disabilities. We strive to ensure that staff and volunteers have appropriate safeguarding training and all necessary checks have been carried out. Each parish has a named Safeguarding Officer and has a Safeguarding Policy on display.

The successful candidate will be subject to pre-appointment checks.



Finance

We aim to meet our parish share ask each year but recognise that this is becoming a greater burden with each passing year. Each parish contributes in full to the clergy expenses and office costs.

Practical Support

Benefice Office: will be established centrally in the Benefice in the coming months.

The Administrator will deal with regular church business, such as rota management and service sheets, alongside administration for baptisms, weddings and funerals, plus general enquiries about church matters. The telephone number will be published. We have an excellent relationship with the local funeral directors.

Cock Crow Magazine

A bi-monthly publication, with a clergy letter, funded by the PCCs of the nine smallest parishes and delivered free to all homes in the those villages. It is published in full on the website and includes details of the Sunday services and churchwardens in every parish.

The Rectory

The Diocesan Director of Property is currently assessing the possibility of changing the Rectory to enable the new Rector-designate to live in one of the villages.



Background

The Benefice is part of the Redenhall Deanery within the Diocese of Norwich.

Slightly further afield is Norwich, the most complete medieval city in the UK. It is home to the University of East Anglia, the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital and the John Innes Centre. It is a renowned centre for arts, music and culture.

There are good communication links with a mainline railway station and frequent trains north to Norwich and south to Ipswich and on to London Liverpool Street. The main trunk roads into the area are mainly good dual carriageways which are being upgraded. The stunning, long coastline of Norfolk and Suffolk is easily accessible about one hour away.

Whilst there may be a misconception that Norfolk is sleepy and remote, its appeal is such that those who do venture here usually stay and grow to love the friendliness of the people, the beautiful skies and the landscape of the coast, the Broads and the Waveney Valley.



The Parishes

Bressingham St John The Baptist

Bressingham is a large village by area with about 600 inhabitants. The Parish Council and Village Hall are shared with Fersfield. We are fortunate to have a good primary school and twice a year the school holds services in the church to celebrate harvest and Christmas.

Services in our church may be few in number but life carries on. Coffee Mornings are well attended and there is a real goodwill towards the church. Recently the cost of major work on four lime trees was paid for by three local residents and a loan from a village charity. The Friends of the church support work on the church fabric as well as helping with cleaning.

The village is a farming community with small industrial sites as well plus a steam museum and garden centre. We still enjoy the luxury of a Village Shop where home made cooked items are also available.

Burston St Mary

The Parish Church, in the centre of the village has reduced services due to the interregnum but would hope to return to a service each week (as before Covid) with one service as a Home Team.

We added a Kitchen and Disabled toilet in the mid 90's and offer the church for hire. We have an active Friends group, Fish & Chip Supper Safari Supper and other events through the year (sometimes with mixed attendance).

Youth for Christ run a Thursday afternoon group for the young people in the village (Term Time) and we had a Luncheon Club once a month before Covid that we are trying to re-establish. Good links with the village school.

A lottery grant of £200,000 some years ago fixed the roof but we had problems with the Vestry and Porch. The congregation is basically the PCC and this is the area we need to focus on going forward.

Fersfield St Andrew

This is the smallest parish in the benefice, but with a lively group of supporters alongside the PCC. The church is the only public building, so is greatly valued as a hub for the whole village.

It is used for Parish Council meetings and for community events in and around it. Services for special occasions are followed by refreshments and time to chat. Successful events such as plant sales and craft fairs involve the whole community.

The support group maintain the grounds and keep the inside of the building sparkling, with a welcoming atmosphere.

Visitors come long distances to see the unique wooden effigy of Robert du Bois, and the memorial to the Rev Francis Blomefield, who wrote his famous History of Norfolk while he was Rector in the 18th century.

Gissing St Mary

Gissing sits about 4 miles to the northeast of Diss and is home to about 250 people, most of whom fall into the 'active retired' category.

The Church has an active 'Friends Group' who fundraise to pay its running costs, apart from the ecclesiastical bills. The PCC, despite a small and ageing congregation, has managed to pay the parish share in recent years. The church has undergone an extensive renovation with heating and improved lighting installed. It is a round towered church with a rare double hammer-beamed roof with carved angels on its posts, dating from the 15th century.

In addition to the church, the centre of Gissing has a new Community Centre, which serves as a social hub for the surrounding area, a pub/restaurant and the Gissing Children's Centre, rated excellent by OFSTED. On the village outskirts, High Oaks care home for people with mental health issues takes part in some village activities.

North Lopham St Nicholas

The parish is one of the smaller ones in the Team, at the Western end of the benefice, but the church has a big heart, seeking to welcome everyone who enters, regardless of age or background.

Regular family services are led by our Home Team; during the vacancy Holy Communion is currently held once, bimonthly. On Sundays when there is no service, an e-letter takes the Gospel reading, a message, prayers and hymn words to all members.

As the only public building in the village open to all every day, the PCC aims to make the church a hub for activities for all ages; coffee mornings, exhibitions and concerts by talented local youngsters. We have strong links with the local Church School, welcoming them for worship every half term, and displaying their craft work. When structural problems in the SW corner have been addressed, we plan to install 'amenities'.

Roydon St Remigius

The first thing that may have struck you is the unusual dedication but what else can we claim that makes us special?

The church is open daily and currently we have a monthly Holy Communion and Morning Prayer.

Roydon is close to Diss but we do have a special village spirit in which the church plays a leading part covering all ages from the Doughnut Church for children to our monthly coffee mornings.

We have a Parish Room, attached to the church, built about 20 years ago, which lets us host other organisations and also helps with our income allowing us to keep the church in excellent state of repair. In addition to the Parish Room Roydon has an excellent modern Village Hall with plenty going on and a thriving village school with which the church has an excellent relationship.

Shelfanger All Saints

Despite the name, we don't hang shelves in Shelfanger, but we do have a village with exceptional community spirit. Its 370 souls care mightily for their historic little church and self-built village hall. We've just raised the roof in a flower-filled and crowded Harvest Festival, organised by the PCC.

Our present service pattern is a monthly Morning Worship and a bi-monthly Holy Communion. The church is open daily for private prayer and hosts talks, concerts and exhibitions. Its members are involved in virtually all parish activities.

Rotary Club? In Shelfanger that means the churchyard mowing team. Their dedication is matched by excellent cleaners and flower arrangers and backed by a vigorous 'Friends' organisation too, all reinforced by a strong Christian faith.

Wider interests from yoga, through Art, a community café, a railway modelling club to crib playing, quizzing and a beer at the bar, are available at the village hall.

South Lopham St Andrew

St. Andrew's is a very significant Church in the County with its magnificent central tower, but more importantly it is a very special place for many local people, it has nine members on the PCC, very enthusiastic and determined that this beautiful, historic place of worship remains open and more importantly, has a regular pattern of services.

Services this year at St. Andrew's continue, occasionally and for special occasions. The PCC is thrilled to have a team of enthusiasts caring for the building and extensive graveyard. There is also a committee, Friends of South Lopham Church, who raise money towards the Fabric of the building, these groups all bringing the village community together.

The church was the venue for a very successful Diss Quilting Exhibition in September with the tower open raising funds. Other successful fundraising events this year held within the parish include a Strawberry tea and to follow, Rona's Elf Village in December which was very successful last year.

Tivetshall St Mary and St Margaret

The village of Tivetshall was originally two parishes which were merged in 2019. The total population is around 700. Both churches are surrounded by agricultural land with St Margaret's being particularly isolated.

St Mary's church collapsed in the 1940's and the grounds are kept neat and tidy by volunteers. The Armistice Day service is held here annually around the war memorial.

The medieval church of St Margaret's is lovingly cared for by the small congregation and contains a fine example of an Elizabethan tympanum which has featured in TV documentaries. There is no electricity or water available which adds to the charm of this unique small church.

A biennial flower festival is held in St Margaret's which is well supported and also sells plants in the porch in the warmer months.

Winfarthing St Mary

The parish of Winfarthing has an ancient history, with evidence of an Anglo-Saxon settlement and burial ground – the subject of a recent Time Team investigation. There is a very active group in the village working towards raising the funds to develop a visitor centre in St Mary's Church. This will not only aim to tell the story of the Anglo-Saxon treasure and its origin, but also incorporate a comfortable new meeting space for local groups, complete with facilities.

We also hold monthly coffee mornings where we sell home-made cakes and crafts. Our service pattern is varied, with an informal 'Village Church' once a month; Morning Prayer, usually taken by the Home Team and a monthly Holy Communion. During the vacancy we have been 'buddying-up' with our close neighbours in Shelfanger, hosting Holy Communion in alternate months. All Saints School is situated next to the church and we are pleased to welcome the school community into the church on a regular basis.

Thank You for reading this,
if you are inspired to come and join us
then do apply!

Helpful links

Diocese of Norwich

www.dioceseofnorwich.org

Church of England

www.churchofengland.org

Living and working in Norfolk – Norfolk County Council

[www.norfolk.gov.uk/jobs-training-and-volunteering/
living- and-working-in-norfolk](http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/jobs-training-and-volunteering/living-and-working-in-norfolk)



The background of the entire page is a purple-tinted image of a large stained glass window. The window features several panels depicting religious figures, likely saints or apostles, in various poses. Some are seated and holding books, while others are standing. The intricate leaded glass patterns and the variety of figures create a rich, historical visual texture.

 THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

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