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September 2024

Priest-in-Charge (half time): Ashill benefice

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Thank you for your interest in the Ashill benefice. These notes are intended to supplement the information given in the Parish Profile, adding a slightly wider perspective with some further information. I hope that they help you to discern whether this might be the post to which you are next called, and we, with you, will be praying for God's wisdom in that discernment.

The Parishes and this job

The Ashill benefice is a small multi-parish benefice, consisting of the four parishes of S Nicholas, Ashill, S George's, Saham Toney, S John the Evangelist, Ovington and S Peter's, Merton. S Peter's is a new addition to the benefice, currently informally while pastoral reorganisation is completed. It replaces Carbrooke, which is moving from Ashill to the benefice of the nearby market town of Watton with which it is now almost contiguous.

You will see from the profile that the Ashill benefice has long been without a parish priest, but the laity have sustained benefice life in a way that is wholly admirable. Their next parish priest will be someone who offers them the stability of priestly ministry of word and sacrament which they have lacked but also someone who will listen to how they have maintained church life, to how they hope to move forward in Christ, and who does not disempower them or deprive them of the leadership they too should properly exercise.

There is a sixth Church of England centre of worship within the benefice, and within the parish of Ashill (<https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/2660/>). This is the Fountain of Life, an extra parochial place (<http://folchurch.co.uk/>). The Vicar and many congregation members left S Nicholas to establish Fountain, and it would be fair to say that this did not happen without some pain. It may be that the residue of a sense of abandonment is something for a new parish priest to listen for and, if necessary, help to heal.

The benefice has adopted the national Church of England safeguarding policy, and it is a requirement of this role that the post holder has a satisfactory enhanced DBS disclosure.

Diocese and Deanery

The benefice falls within the Archdeaconry of Lynn, and so under the care of the Bishop of Lynn (The Rt Rev'd Dr Jane Steen) and the Archdeacon of Lynn (The Venerable Catherine Dobson). The parish is in the Breckland Deanery whose Rural Dean is The Revd Stephen Thorp who is the Rector of Necton. There are 13 benefices in the Breckland Deanery with 6 licenced clergy, 15 clergy with Permission to Officiate and 7 Licensed Lay Ministers and 14 Authorised Worship Assistants. Attendance at Synod and Chapter is an expectation.

The Diocese of Norwich's vision is to be Transformed by Christ: Prayerful, Pastoral, Prophetic. You can find out more information about this on the diocesan website. Please see:

<https://www.dioceseofnorwich.org/about/vision-priorities/>. The Diocese is geographically large and predominantly rural. This is especially true of the Lynn area where we have glorious coastal and deeply rural benefices as well as thriving market towns and the larger town of King's Lynn.

Patronage

Patrons for the benefice are the Bishop of Norwich, the Wardens & Scholars of St Mary's College of Wincher in Oxford (commonly called New College), Chancellor, Master & Scholars of University Cambridge; Society for the Maintenance of the Faith.

Enquiries, Applications and Interviews

An application can be made via the diocesan website at

<https://www.dioceseofnorwich.org/about/vacancies/>

The closing date for applications is Monday 21st October (9.00am) and interviews will be held on Tuesday 26th November.

If you would like to have an informal discussion before deciding whether to apply, please do be in touch by telephone or e-mail with the Bishop and the Archdeacon's PA, Mrs Ann Whittet (Ann.whittet@dioceseofnorwich.org; 01362 709200).

You will be in our prayers as you discern further whether to explore a possible call to the Ashill benefice and we hope very much to meet you.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jane Steen', written in a cursive style.