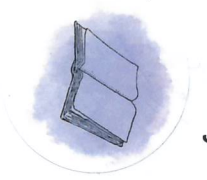


1 Church name: St Botolph's

Date:

Who are you?

- The parish church at the top of the hill in a growing town: Sharing God's love with Shepshed.
- Part of the benefice of Shepshed and The Oaks, with St James.
- Multiple congregations in one church across a variety of services.
- A mixed community of ages and stages!
- A church in vacancy since June 2022.



Where are you going?

- Forwards in faith!
- We are becoming a more lay led church.
- Continuing to encourage lay members of the church to assist in different aspects of leading worship.
- Deepening relationships with our benefice partners at St James'.
- Increasing involvement with the church school and other local schools.



Where have you come from?

- There has been a place of worship on our site since the 11th century.
- Worship here could once have been described as quite 'high church' which over time has become more broad.
- A large reordering project took place on 2007/8 to enable the church building to be used more flexibly; it has taken people a long time to adapt to this change.
- Before covid, we were a thriving growing church and average numbers at our main 10am service were approaching 100 with 25 children part of this.
- In recent years several members of our congregation have been nurtured and supported to apply for ordination.



What are you doing now?

- Restructuring our PCC to become more self-sufficient in the absence of an incumbent or church wardens.
- Continuing to provide a variety of services, Sunday's, midweek and special services.
- Building children and Youth work – including links with local schools.
- Welcoming the community in – activities in the church hall, open church twice a week, social events, community services at special events e.g. light a life and Christingles at Christmas.

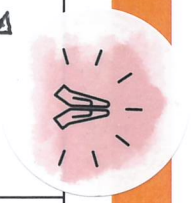


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Date:

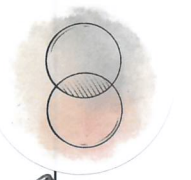
Where are you seeing the Kingdom of God emerging?

- Through our children and Young People.
- Through the growing confidence of lay people involved in leading a variety of worship.
- New faces in the congregation
- Some people moving on to follow Gods calling to ordination.



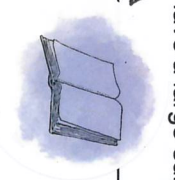
What are you fearful about?

- Loosing long standing members of our congregation who feel a familiar ordained priest is important in their place of worship.
- An overlap within new minister communities leading to some roles becoming redundant.
- The potential geographical spread/number of churches that ordained ministers with in a new minister community may have to cover.
- How the pastoral needs of the congregation and local community will be met without a permanent incumbent.
- Becoming reliant on a small number of volunteers who don't have the support and guidance of an incumbent.
- Declining numbers.
- Building maintenance and money. We have a large sum of money required for a large amount of work on our roof.



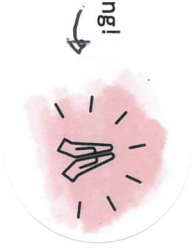
How can others pray for you?

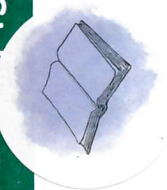
- For us to retain our enthusiasm.
- For cohesion and stability.
- For our roof to be successfully fixed.
- For the courage vision and resources to make a difference in the local community.



What are you hopeful for?

- Clear guidance and proven methods to move into Minister community formation which will enable us to become more outward facing in the community.
- Maintaining a broad church with a wider outlook.
- Working more closely with other churches – sharing expertise and experience. Complementary strengths and weaknesses and sharing of resources.
- Developing better links in the community.
- Progress.
- Consistency.
- A vicar we can call our own – even if we are sharing!





St Leonard's, Swithland



Who are you?

- St Leonard's is a rural community in Charrwood Forest.
- We have a small, mature, and sadly diminishing congregation, drawn from surrounding villages, with few young families.
- Nevertheless, we are a vibrant church with hardworking members who love our church and enjoy working with one another.
- We are a welcoming church following both BCP and CW services.

Where are you going?

Our vision is hopefully:

- To grow the church congregation, and increase support for its activities, such as the choir.
- To attract younger people into the church.
- To develop and increase our existing ties with the local community.
- To maintain a Christian presence in the village with weekly services offering spiritual nourishment for all.

Where have you come from?

- St Leonard's is a beautiful Anglo-Norman church dating back to the 12th century, earlier worshippers being drawn from workers on the Danvers estate.
- We are part of the benefice of Swithland, Woodhouse and Woodhouse Eaves, but now share our priest with the churches in neighbouring Mountsorrel.

What are you doing now?

- Weekly Sunday services, and additional services for festivals.
- Bible study through ecumenical Christians in the Forest meetings.
- Strong links with St Leonard's CofE primary school.
- A thriving Mothers & Toddlers Group held in church in termtime.
- Communities and Outreach team offer Open Church afternoons in Summer and concerts and festivals through the year open to the wider community, as well as a monthly magazine and website.
- Church Groups: Choir, Bellringers, Church Wives, Church Men's Group, Pastoral visiting (in development).



St Leonard's, Swithland



Where are you seeing the Kingdom of God emerging?

- In spiritual development, through our worship and bible study.
- In promoting the church and Jesus' teaching within the community, through our church groups, ties with our local school, and our outreach events which bring others into the church.
- In loving our neighbours, through charitable fund-raising, support for our local food bank, and the development of a Pastoral visiting team.

What are you hopeful for?

- Growth, both in numbers and in spirituality.
- The opportunity to work joyfully with other churches, learning from different backgrounds and churchmanship.
- Fewer administrative burdens on both clergy and volunteers, allowing more time for the things of God.
- That Minster Communities will bring us closer together in growing our Christian faith.

What are you fearful about?

- The closure of churches depriving us of access to the spiritual nourishment and leadership we need as practising Christians.
- The increased burden on already overstretched and stressed clergy.
- The financial viability of parishes and the Diocese, in the face of diminishing congregations and cost of living rises.
- That older and frailer member of our congregation may find it hard to attend services if we cannot provide them locally. We are already heavily dependent on the generosity of retired clergy.

How can others pray for you?

That we may all have the courage, compassion and humility to face any changes and challenges that may come, and the vision and inspiration to play our part in making the formation of our Minster Community work to further the Kingdom of God.

1 All Saints Thorpe Acre with Dishley

Date:

- Who are you?**
- A parish on the edge of Loughborough.
 - A church at the heart of the community which is very diverse.
 - Accepting of all people from all backgrounds, ethnicities and disabilities.
 - A family church
 - We are an informal evangelical style of Anglican church, with a contemporary worship style.
 - We offer a home to a range of community groups.
 - Low C of E
 - Evangelical, bible believing, charismatic, striving to be inclusive
 - There is always a warm welcome for all each Sunday and at every weekday activity.
 - Many of the Church members come from non-Anglican backgrounds



- Where have you come from?**
- Largest parish that is expanding with new houses
 - We serve a deprived area of Loughborough alongside a more affluent community.
 - A small Parish church built in 1845 to serve a small number of Anglicans which grew and was extended to meet the growth in the 1980's
 - Now serves a huge parish which is constantly growing with a further 3200 new homes being built which will border on two of our neighbouring parishes.
 - Our numbers are fairly static as people leave, die (elderly congregation) or join. Middle aged to elderly congregation, a few younger families.
 - Originally a village church which has grown and developed over the last 180 years. Numbers have changed over last 30 years as new free churches grew nearby and serve the student population.
 - History – the church grew in the 1980's lots of children and youth work, and a big r to the elderly – the children grew up and left and the large elderly population natu diminished, though this work is still active.

Where are you going?

- Post covid we were appointed a new minister and now we aim to furth grow and develop
- Expanding to the community by reaching parents with toddlers.
- Reconnecting with the local schools
- With the introduction of Minster communities this is a hard question to answer but hopefully to grow in numbers and maturity of Christians to reach out to the local community and beyond.
- Preparing to become more inclusive, working alongside other parishes, as the Minister communities are formed
- We want to see people coming to faith and growing in that faith and discipleship.
- Church being equipped to share the love of God in the area



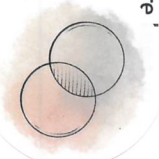
What are you doing now?

- Small study groups, Toddlers church, ladies and men's breakfasts, coffee mornings.
- New ministries and groups are evolving which reach out to the community and to new Christians.
- Alpha course – new Beta group meeting to follow on from the course.
- Working with the local Community group in providing lunches and fellowship to non-church members – warm spaces.
- Revival of the Coffee Morning and Study group in Hanover Court elderly residences
- Regular in person services which also go online, having teaching series alongside the rhythm of the Anglican liturgy.
- We have good Bible teaching and together with our Vicar and Lay Leadership team seek to show God's love to our community.
- Kingdom of God we aim to "spiritually" please, through nurturing, listening and living the Christian way

2 All Saints Thorpe Acre cum Dishley

Date:

- Where are you seeing the Kingdom of God emerging?**
- Toddlers, Children's church, Warm spaces, Breakfast- men's and ladies
 - New ministries and groups are evolving which reach out to the community and to new Christians.
 - Alpha course – new Beta group meeting to follow on from the course.
 - Working with the local Community group in providing lunches and fellowship to non-church members
 - Revival of the Coffee Morning and Study group in Hanover Court (elderly residences)
 - New people joining since the pandemic in which we see God working.
 - Since we have had our new vicar – numbers seem to have been steadily growing and people who had left are returning.
 - There are 7 local schools in our Parish. As the curriculum allows, we are 'engage more closely with them
 - In the developing links with the local community and schools

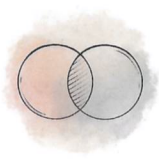
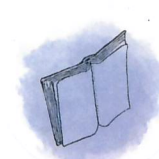


What are you hopeful for?

- Church being more intergenerational.
- People growing in the kingdom of God in our community
- That there will be enough personnel to keep all churches open and able to carry on their individual plans.
- Finding peace and harmony and a shared vision for reaching out to the parish and communities.
- To be able to offer some ministries that we cannot supply because of limited resources and personnel. Increased collaboration with others.
- It will allow thinking outside the walls of our buildings to seek the people God is calling.
- It will mobilise support where it is needed to respond to signs of Gods kingdom.
- Maybe find likeminded souls in other churches, so we can work together.
- Clarity in this whole process
- That as we continue to pray fervently for our church, answered prayer will fulfill us.
- That the process will be better than the concerns currently feared.
- Seeing increased numbers of people coming into church buildings.

What are you fearful about?

- Churches/active congregations being stretched too far.
- Vicars being stretched with extra workload.
- Conflict within churches- not working together.
- Change and the unknown
- Loss of identity
- Less oversight of lay leadership – false teaching potential
- The process will drag on and may cause lasting hurt
- It may weaken rather than strengthen the C of E across the diocese.
- Fearful we lose "sight" of the minister, their pastoral oversight, as well as a strategic oversight.
- The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Matthew 9:37
- That the process of Minster communities / Shaped by God causes more upset than it should.
- That people will just up and leave because of it. That Churches with differences in theology are forced to work together. For example, views on LLF, women in ministry, high church, evangelical, liberal etc.
- Losing momentum with the progress we are making at the moment, there are so many things that are growing and developing.



How can others pray for you?

- Against spiritual attack throughout this process
- Work in harmony
- Church to grow in the community
- For patience and tolerance in the process.
- For all the concerns noted in the above box.
- That we make the right steps, with limited resources
- Pray for a hunger and desire for our wider community to seek God's love.
- Pray for each other within our Church as we encourage others and grow together.
- That everyone will listen and respect each other.

1

Church name: St Matthew, Worthington

Date:

Who are you?

We are a rural congregation who meets in St Matthew's Worthington, welcoming Methodist and other CofE Churches. We have six members of our PCC and our weekly attendance is around 12.

Where have you come from?

Founded in the 12th Century as a dormitory for monks from Breedon on the Hill, St Matthew's has been an active place of worship since the mid 18th Century.



Where are you going?

We are looking to appoint a Locally Authorised Minister in Christina Walmsley. We are not a growing church, even though we welcome others from local churches as their lives and mobility changes. We are finding and trying to find more ways to work with other churches in our Family of Churches, particularly Holy Trinity Ashby. This includes administration, systems and hopefully soon, grants and faculty applications.

What are you doing now?

We are involved with our local Schools, both county primary and CofE. We host a Cafe Church every Thursday morning. The Church building is occasionally used for Alpha Day's away, as a voting station, and for other village events like the garage sale and other one off events like Ashby Round Table having a guest speaker.

2

Church name: St. Matthew's Worthington

Date: 16th October 2023

Where are you seeing the Kingdom of God emerging?

In faithfulness in suffering as our members face the challenges of aging and ill health, with much love and prayer for one another. The church is also interceding for a move of God to bring new kingdom life to the villages we serve. In our communities, through the schools and local people and particularly our range of ministers who take occasional offices, including Christina our soon to be authorised local minister who grew up in the parish. The united Flagstaff services have been encouraging.

What are you fearful about?

There being no one left in the church and so no longer being viable as a place of worship, mission and outreach.

What are you hopeful for?

Working together with other churches, with people joining us. We have seen this with people from neighbouring churches, but we long to see people coming to faith in Jesus.

How can others pray for you?

For a revival in our parish. For a growing range of ways of communicating with our community and church members.

1 Church name: St Mary's, Wymeswold

Date:

- Who are you?
- Rural village of around 1,300 people.
 - Largely White – British population, the majority of whom identify as “Christian” in the Census.
 - Historic farming community supplemented by commuter community to surrounding towns.
 - There is a Church of England Primary School in the village with which we have a strong connection.
 - Registered Inclusive Church and working towards Eco Church and Fairtrade recognition.

Where have you come from?

- Joined with Prestwold in and part of the Barrow and Wolds Group since c2010. Single Benefice with St Andrew, Prestwold with Hoton.
- Historic close connection with Methodist Church in the village.
- Trying new things – Church café, different types of services (Breakfast services, variety of Mission Praise.
- Church originally built in 13th century, refurbished in 19th century by Augustus Pugin, Grade 1 listed.

Where are you going?

- Major events such as Remembrance and Crib service are well attended.
- We have a group actively working on the ideas in “I village churches thrive”.
- We have seen new people at church but seek to identify effective outreach activities to grow our numbers.
- Significant growth in our Ministry Team, including Ordained, Associate and Locally Authorised ministers.



What are you doing now?

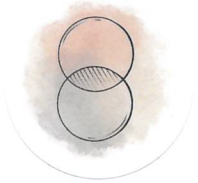
- We have regular Sunday services with evening services on the 2nd and 4th Sunday, including two BCP services.
- Weekly Bible study on Monday.
- Weekly House prayer groups have been established.
- We perform “Open the Book” stories at the village school each week and the Priest in Charge and Curate take collective Worship at least once a week.
- Wymeswold Church Appeal Fund hold many activities in and out of church to raise funds for fabric work.



2 Church name: St Mary's, Wymeswold

Date:

- Where are you seeing the Kingdom of God emerging?
- Recent new developments – Prayer groups, “How village churches thrive” group.
 - Significant growth in our Ministry Team, including Ordained, Associate and Locally Authorised ministers.
 - Since Covid we have seen a number of people join or return to our church congregation.



What are you fearful about?

- We fear fewer people will attend church. There is no service in their local church.
- An aging congregation and a shortage of willing volunteers.
- The expectations of volunteers will exceed their capacity to deliver.
- Losing our identity as a village parish church within a larger Minster Community.
- Some of the village demographic is not represented in the church congregation, and a number of people go outside of the village to worship elsewhere.



What are you hopeful for?

- As well as a “local minister”, a priest that is identified with each parish.
- A Community that is focused on rural ministry.
- Working in partnership to grow and develop in our mission and discipleship. Sharing good practice and learning from churches and communities we have hitherto not known well.
- The liberty and freedom to exercise our gifts and ministries.
- Access to resources that help us in our current specific missional context.

How can others pray for you?

- Success of the “How village churches thrive” group.
- A real and personal sense of God with us when we meet, and a spiritual dependance on God that acknowledges that there is work to be done in us.
- Confidence to engage in the Minster Community Formation Process and transition into working in partnership in a Minster Community.
- For more lay people to realise vocations to ministry, including leading worship and pastoral care.

