

## The United Benefice of

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Holy Trinity Church &  
Community Centre, Yeovil

with

St. Mary Magdalene Church,  
Barwick

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## Welcome

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We welcome you as you read our profile. May it be a tool to help you discern whether this is the place that God is calling you to.

Our church family serves in many wonderful and varied ways across the benefice and the wider community. We are one united benefice with two churches, sharing and encouraging one another in the service and proclamation of God's Kingdom. We are a family of believers who are not perfect, who invariably make mistakes, and who get things wrong, but who seek to follow Jesus and to serve as disciples of Jesus, knowing that the grace of God welcomes us and that the love of God has the power to transform us all.



St Mary Magdalene

St. Mary Magdalene Church, Barwick, is an ancient place of worship built in the 13th century and is a Grade II\* listed building. Holy Trinity Church and Community Centre, Yeovil, is a modern church building that opened in 1998. As such, both churches have their own unique character and this offers the benefice a rich experience of worship and community.

Holy Trinity is a church and a community complex located in a semi-urban, residential and industrial area. And St Mary's is a church which dates back 800 years and serves as a focus for the conjoined villages of Barwick with Stoford. The joint benefice formed following a diocesan reorganisation in 1995. Since 2014 there has been a sole priest in the benefice with, during the last two years a curate in training.



Holy Trinity

We have regular services of worship, both formal and informal, on Sundays and throughout the week. There are weekly church and fellowship groups, as well as monthly and seasonal events throughout the year at both churches. The two distinct churches and their respective parishes have their own unique character and, as such, afford this united benefice a rich and varied experience of worship and community. From tea parties to cinema evenings, live sports on the big screen to arts and crafts events, the benefice has much to offer across the two locations.



"I am a Reader in the Benefice but most of my ministry is at St Mary Magdalene. I love our country church which I feel has an atmosphere engendered by hundreds of years of people at worship and prayer - contemplative prayer is an important part of my life."

Sally McConnell



Chris Story is a retired army officer and ex-sailing instructor and project manager. He is the PCC Fabric Member and has led two major projects - providing a servery and toilet in the church and renovating the church tower roof. With lots of energy, he just gets on with whatever needs doing.

Di Gorrige is parish secretary for Holy Trinity and Howard Gorrige is Reader and churchwarden:

"My favourite hymn is 'O love that will not let me go'

Having wandered away several times since being a 7-year old choirboy, I have always been drawn back by that 'love that will not let me go'.

*'I lay in dust life's glory dead and from the ground there blossoms red life that shall endless be'."*



"I have spent the majority of my church worship at St Mary Magdalene Church, Barwick. I was baptised, confirmed and married there. I have held the position of PCC member and Churchwarden for many years and I felt it was an honour to do so. I fully support Nicky in her role as Churchwarden and it is nice to see a younger member taking over. I feel at peace when I enter the beautiful building, we are a like a big family and I am very proud to be a member of this church and the benefice with Holy Trinity."

Carol Guppy



Coral Story is a retired ex-nurse and mental health professional and a past churchwarden. She is the church's safeguarding lead, is active on the social committee and looks after the Memorial Garden. A people-person, particularly interested in art and children, including the Chernobyl Children's Lifeline. Coral is involved in conservation and the eternal fund raising and cooking for church events.



Nicky Gold is churchwarden at St Mary Magdalene.

"What the church means to me? I can answer that in one word - family. The love found in a family is the love shared within our congregation. We don't always agree with each other but we always forgive and accept each other's differences. If anyone needs help our 'family' rallies around to answer the call.

The Lord sent me to this village and I'm so thankful he did. The church and the people are truly inspiring."



To share God's love  
through Jesus:  
following Christ and  
living this out in the  
community

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

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We want to reach out and grow the Kingdom of God in the communities around us. However, growth is not simply about numbers. It is about deepening our faith as churches and recommitting ourselves to the Great Commission. We also need to reassess how we might effectively connect with those who may not easily relate to the traditions and expressions of worship presently offered in the benefice. As a Christian community, we have a spirituality and truth that is powerful and creative, and we need to respond to the Gospel.

The aspiration, therefore, is to nurture greater creativity and some contemporary expressions of worship; to deepen personal faith and release the collective gifts of the church in ministry and mission; to deliver a strong and strategic mission plan and evaluation framework in key areas of **worship**, **discipleship** and **mission**.

The COVID 19 pandemic has, of necessity, seriously affected our Church life. However, we have kept the churches open for private prayer at specified times and, when not in "lockdown", maintained united benefice services, observing social distancing. We did not run "virtual services" at other times due to our congregations' demographic though we were able to maintain our worship links with Holy Trinity School and with Barwick School throughout this period. We maintained contact with all our parishioners through a weekly link sheet, often including a sermon or reflection to give people something to think about during the week.

Our vision now includes a desire to move from this "wasteland" to a more productive ministry in our parish. We may have lost a few people but there is a greater spirit of unity, in part due to the benefice services, and a stronger sense of moving forward, even excitement, at what we may be able to do when real freedoms are restored.

St Mary Magdalene		Holy Trinity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To demonstrate God’s love by the way we respond to others.</li> <li>To be a reflective and tolerant congregation, offering friendship, prayer and support for everyone.</li> <li>To offer teaching about the Christian way of life.</li> </ul>	<p>Authentic and effective discipleship</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unlock the potential of individuals as followers of Christ.</li> <li>Deepen both church fellowship and faith.</li> <li>See discipleship as a powerful and biblical model for mentoring others.</li> <li>Work to grow as individuals and as a Christian community.</li> <li>Be tolerant and reflective.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To seek opportunities to reach out and involve others within the community and develop links with the local school.</li> <li>To continue to develop opportunities for social interaction.</li> </ul>	<p>Mission and Ministry</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify our objectives: offering opportunities for social interaction, friendship, prayer and support, developing links with our schools, partnering with our communities</li> <li>Find ways of delivering these objectives in a sustainable and effective way. We need to reassess our existing ministries and mission areas; retaining some but removing others, in order for the benefice to remain both effective and focused.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To be a focus of worship and prayer.</li> <li>To continue to develop models of worship.</li> <li>To acknowledge the need for change while bearing in mind the need to consider the pace of change.</li> </ul>	<p>Worship</p>	<p>We need honest reassessment and action, particularly concerning our approach to Sunday services. This two-fold approach to worship may afford a helpful framework.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognise that we need an outward-facing approach to worship, which is mindful of those with little church experience or exposure to the various church traditions that we may be used to personally.</li> <li>Acknowledge that our current inward-facing approach to worship is valid and valued and must continue to meet the needs of those within our congregation.</li> </ol>

## What sort of person would we like?

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We prayerfully seek the following:

- Someone called by God to serve in this benefice.
- A prayerful individual who believes that the Holy Spirit can change lives today.
- Someone with a sound biblical approach to theology, committed to sharing the love of Christ with those in our communities.
- An authentic and effective team leader, who is able to collaborate, delegate and communicate well.
- An individual who is forward-thinking and who can transform new ministry and mission ideas and influences into action, as well as appreciating the value of more traditional expressions of worship.
- A motivated person who is dedicated to advancing vocational and ministry callings within the church and community.
- A supportive person who is willing to be ex-officio of the Local Governing Body of Holy Trinity Primary School and who can build upon the existing excellent relationships we have with both primary schools in the benefice.



## What we can offer you

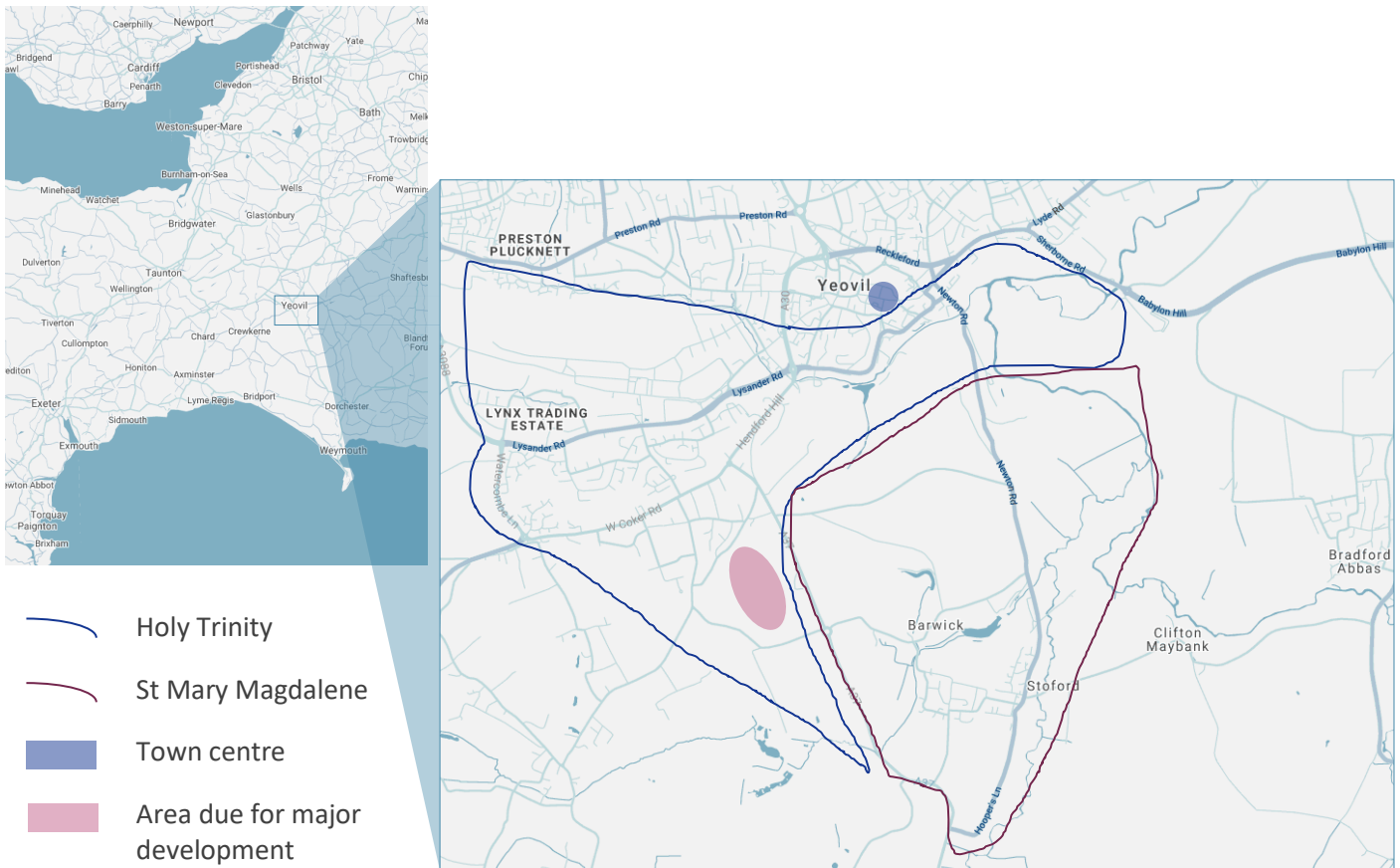
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- The encouragement and support, both physically and prayerfully, of the churchwardens, PCC and two compassionate, welcoming and loving congregations who are excited about what God is doing and going to do among us and in our extended community.
- The active support of two experienced and able Lay Readers, two Lay Worship Assistants, a group of Lay Pastoral Assistants and many lay people who are willing and able to conduct services.
- A small attractive village church.
- A modern, accessible, well-equipped church and community centre with links to upward of 18 groups meeting each month, offering excellent opportunities for evangelism in the community.
- A modern, well-equipped, four-bedroom vicarage.



Clockwise from top left: a Baptism at Holy Trinity, the historic interior of St Mary Magdalene and the vicarage.

# The united benefice



The joint benefice formed following a diocesan re-organisation in 1995. Until 2006 we had an assistant priest living in Barwick who also served in town chaplaincies. Since 2014 there has been a sole priest in the benefice with, during the last two years, a curate in training.

Since the merging of the two parishes, the congregations have gradually moved to greater integration. This was initially through joint Lent courses and occasional joint services alternating between the two churches. These latter have become more frequent and are also now a regular feature at Christmas and Easter. Social events, while organised by each individual church, encourage joint participation.

Each parish retains its own PCC and finances and keep their own identities; one as an essentially rural community, albeit on the edge of Yeovil, the other almost entirely urban in character. The two churches represent flexibility and diversity.

Clergy and Readers take services in both parishes with service times allowing people to preach, lead or preside at both churches on a Sunday. This along with personal friendships and various joint activities makes for good relationships between the two.

Yeovil has a population of over 40,000 and is a manufacturing, shopping and service centre for the surrounding extensive rural area with its small villages and larger urban centres. The town is located 40 minutes from the world-renowned Jurassic Coast; the North Somerset coast and Exmoor National Park are also easily accessible. There are good rail services linking Yeovil to London and Exeter, as well as to Bristol and Bath.

## Location

The region has several high-achieving secondary schools, with a Sixth Form College, adult education centre and university campus attached to Bournemouth University. There are numerous leisure opportunities and good health facilities, doctor's surgeries and Yeovil's own foundation-status hospital, which is currently the town's largest employer.

## Worship

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	St Mary Magdalene, Barwick	Holy Trinity Church and Community Centre
1st Sunday	9.30am <b>Eucharist (CW)</b>	9.30am <b>Café Church</b> 11am <b>Open Space</b>
2nd Sunday	9.30am <b>Morning Worship (CW)</b>	9.30am <b>Café Church</b> 11am <b>Eucharist</b>
3rd Sunday	9.30am <b>Eucharist (CW)</b>	9.30am <b>Café Church</b> 11am <b>Morning Worship</b>
4th Sunday	9.30am <b>Morning Worship</b> with a focus on our welcome to children	9.30am <b>Café Church</b> 11am <b>Eucharist</b>
5th Sunday	9.30am <b>Eucharist (CW)</b>	9.30am <b>Café Church</b> <b>Communion</b> 11am <b>Morning Worship</b>
Tuesday		10am <b>Church Mice</b>
Friday		<b>School Worship</b>

# St Mary Magdalene

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**Setting** The church serves the conjoined villages of Barwick and Stoford which consist of farms and housing of a variety of types and ages, including social housing for families and the elderly. There is a good bus service to Yeovil, which is just two miles away, together with train services to Exeter and London Waterloo. Together the villages have a population of approximately 1,400, within which there is a wealth of diversity. There is a (non-church) primary school and a pre-school group which is also accommodated in a school building.

**Building** The earliest part of the church building is about 800 years old but it has evolved over the years and is still considered to be an important part of village life. The carved pew ends are a particular feature. There are those who attend the church and others in the village, who love the building and are prepared to care for it. We have a Heritage committee and an on-going Fabric Fund to that end. Extensive repairs to the roof have recently been carried out.



An example of the Jacobean carvings

## Lay involvement and organisation

The incumbent will be supported by a Reader, a churchwarden and the PCC (currently further support is being provided by retired priests); members of the congregation read the Old and New Testament lessons, act as servers and occasionally provide the intercessions.

The church has two organists who play for all services but sometimes we use guitar, concertina or percussion to enhance or change part of that provision. There is no permanent choir but we form an ad hoc choir for special occasions and at other times when it is possible.

Members of the congregation visit the sick, elderly and others in need.

## Services and smaller group provision

Currently, Sunday services are as follows:

1st, 3rd and 5th Sundays	Parish Eucharist, part sung service at which vestments are worn (Common Worship).
2nd Sunday	Morning worship with hymns (common worship but with our own service sheets).
4th Sunday	“4th Sunday” based on Morning Worship



We should like to develop “4th Sunday” so that children feel particularly welcome (service sheets with appropriate hymns plus activities).

Occasional evening services (e.g. the patronal Festival) and Compline or a special format appropriate to the day.

The average attendance at services is in the high teens but at major festivals and on Remembrance Sunday the church is often full.

2019 occasional offices attendance:

Baptisms	4
Weddings	2
Funerals	4 (plus additional Crematorium services and interments of ashes).

Lent and Advent courses, sometimes using the church, sometimes a house locally and usually run in conjunction with Holy Trinity.

Home Communion and Nursing Home visits.

There are 23 members on the electoral roll.

Although Barwick and Stoford Primary School is not a church foundation, the pupils are brought to the church at least once a term for services or educational input - they always like clergy or Readers to take part in their services. Some church members also go into school to assist by, for example, hearing the children read. We are encouraged that the Headteacher is keen to develop further links with the church and we hope that the incumbent will occasionally lead collective worship in school (once a month at present) as well as supporting this development. Children from the pre-school group are also brought up to the church during the year to explore their heritage. They also attend the monthly coffee mornings run by the church at the community centre within the sheltered housing complex.

The church has supported a great deal of expenditure on fabric during the last two years and as a result the Diocese has agreed to a reduction in our parish share for this year and next. Fund raisers work tirelessly to achieve this financial support by running a variety of social events



One of our wedding parties

## Electoral roll

## Children and young people

## Finance

throughout the year, usually in the church or the community centre at Whitcross.

## Mission and outreach



A social event at Whitcross

This is also part of our outreach into the local community because there are many people from the villages who enjoy attending these events, but at present rarely come to church services. People still consider the church and activities associated with it as a central facility and part of village life and we feel it is important that we are seen to be fulfilling that role in our outreach.

Our last major project was to install a toilet and kitchen/servery to extend the use of the church and the extra space provided by the removal of some pews also gives an area for activities and socialising. We hope this will help us to extend our mission within the village.

We have an envelope scheme for regular giving and also give, in money or in kind, to the Yeovil 'Lord's Larder' providing for those in need, to Water Aid, Christian Aid, The British Legion and Christmas shoeboxes. We have an important link with a charity which arranges holidays in England for children from Chernobyl for a week each year and they are welcomed to the village by church members for activities and socialising.

Further outreach is achieved by our 'Angel Project' which began last year: a prayer based initiative involving the wider community and giving help to a project, instigated by one of our parishioners, called the 'Geranium Trust', which reaches out to the lonely, bereaved and other people who need space to talk to someone or be alone.

During the current pandemic church members have been involved in a village wide initiative which has given people in vulnerable groups the opportunity to have shopping or odd jobs done, and anyone who is feeling lonely, isolated or anxious, a phone contact to ring. As a church community we have been kept in touch by receiving the Benefice weekly services, readings, reflections and updates. Pastoral 'visits' have taken place on the phone.



## Holy Trinity

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### Setting

Holy Trinity parish covers about a quarter of the town of Yeovil and lies mostly in the south west. A significant area is taken up by Leonardo (formerly Westland Helicopters), a major employer in the town, and other small businesses. The church has had close links with the workers of Leonardo and holds a once a month communion service in the church for all members of the Leonardo community.

The church is surrounded by mostly owner-occupied housing and is in a more affluent part of Yeovil. There is a small area of social housing and a mobile home park within the parish. In recent years, Yeovil has almost doubled in size as there have been several new housing developments with a further large housing development planned for Keyford in the south of the benefice.

Holy Trinity School lies immediately south of the church and draws children from the same area that is served by the church.

Built in 1846, the original Holy Trinity church was in the town centre. This and St Mary's Church, a mission church built in 1946, were replaced in 1998 by a modern church and community centre on Lysander Road.

The single storey building is easily accessible with a large parking area. The church itself, which can hold up to 400, is a flexible open space with folding screens dividing it from a hall and meeting room, both of which can be incorporated for large gatherings. There is a small kitchen, an office and a sacristy, with an extensive garden at the side of the church. The facilities for disabled people are excellent.

It is a suitable venue for concerts, Stagecoach-type dramas, lectures and large meetings. The church and community facilities are used by some 20 to 30 community groups each month. It also serves as a Place of Refuge for the community.

The original Holy Trinity church was of an Anglo-Catholic tradition but St Mary's was a mission church, which was in a relatively new housing area and was more middle-of-the-road. This resulted in a combined church that has moved to a more open evangelical position but still retains many of the formal structures. The congregation has been open to new ideas and new styles of worship.

### Building



Holy Trinity site

### Churchmanship and organisation



Folk night

Visitors and new-comers have often commented upon the especially warm welcome they receive, whether coming for a service, being part of a group using the building or just dropping in.

The ethos of Holy Trinity is unlike most churches in that it is not just a church but also a community centre and, as far as possible, we try to integrate the two, and over the last decade this has been taking place.

This includes families whose children attend Holy Trinity School. There is also recognition that new methods are needed to reach those who have previously had little or no contact with the traditional church.

### Services and smaller group provision

Café Church is held weekly at 9.30am starting with a continental breakfast followed by an informal time of worship, bible study, prayer and discussion, led by members of the group. There are about 14 people attending - most of whom stay for the 11am service.

The 1st Sunday of each month has Open Space as it's 11am service. This is a recent introduction with an open, informal structure and with contemporary music, although the format is still developing.

The Eucharist (2nd and 4th) and Morning Worship (3rd and 5th) are more traditional services and use forms of Common Worship. Robing for clergy, Readers and servers is optional for Morning Worship though usually worn for the Eucharist services. We mainly use a keyboard but also use an organ, guitar and other instruments and we also use computer generated accompaniments, depending upon who is available. We have a good sound system and visual equipment in the church, both recently updated. The congregation take part in reading the lessons and leading the intercessions. This older congregation, a group of whom saw the church built and develop, is very supportive and adaptable. Some members are currently housebound. The average attendance is 24.

Leonardo's Christian Fellowship meets on the first Wednesday of each month for a communion service.

A number of occasional services are held such as funerals and baptisms.

There is currently one house group which meets weekly with up to 10 attending. This gives opportunities for bible study and general discussion on Christianity and the life of the church.

There is also a monthly evening gathering called Jn1010, which offers a reflective and prayerful space to engage with God. This is an opportunity for silence, as well as acoustic worship and creative space for individuals prayerfully to seek, encounter and respond to God.

There is a benefice prayer every Monday morning and an evening prayer on the second Tuesday of each month.

Baptism courses are run by the clergy for individual families as are confirmation classes.

Discipleship courses have been run during Lent.

There are currently 24 members on the Electoral Roll.

We do not currently have a paid Children and Families worker, our previous occupants of the post have been voluntary members of the congregation and this is something that needs strengthening...

We continue to provide the following:

**Church Mice** is run by church members who are also members of the Mother's union and has been going for nearly 20 years. Young families and carers meet once a week, enjoying socialising over a cup of tea while the children play. Parents and carers can chat with the team from Mother's Union which gives opportunities for baptism and faith development as well as any other topics which may arise from time to time.

**Mini Music** meets weekly during term time and is aimed at babies and children from 0-4. The group meets for singing rhymes with action songs and musical instruments, offering companionship for those who attend.

**Messy Church** is run on a seasonal basis by volunteers from the congregation.

**Uniform Groups** associated with the church meet at their own premises on Lysander Road, however there are strong links with these youth groups and they attend the church for special seasonal services and the annual Remembrance Service.

## Electoral roll

## Children and young people



Church Mice



A visit to the Bishop's Palace with Bishop Peter

## Holy Trinity School

School worship is a crucial part of church life. There is a very strong link between the school and the church, with school worship every Friday morning at the church and clergy-led worship afternoons held regularly in the school. There are also termly spirituality days, services for every major Christian festival and end-of-term school services held in the church. Adam Beauford, the head teacher, writes:

“We are looking for a vicar who will work closely with the school to foster and enhance the positive relationships between the school, church and community in the widest sense. Our aim is continually to improve the learning opportunities for the children, in particular the Christian character and ethos of our school. Therefore, we are open to creative ideas, challenges and development so that we provide the very best for our children. We would want the new vicar to be part of this process.”

## Finance

As both a church and community centre, the key income flows for Holy Trinity Church and Community Centre, Yeovil, are donations from church members and rental income from community groups.

In the twelve months to September 2019, the total income amounted to £49,000 of which donations and gift aid amounted to £21,000 and rental income £27,000.

Rental income covers the operational costs of running the complex. Donations and gift aid, although on a slow downward trajectory due largely to an ageing congregation, approximately cover the diocesan quota of £19,000 and the cost of services and clergy expenses.

The PCC runs a small payroll for the church administrator and the housekeeper. The PCC is debt-free having long ago paid for the building complex. In the last year, there has been significant expenditure on the fabric of the building, funded by a legacy. This has included major maintenance to the roof, complete internal redecoration, as well as the renewal of lighting and audio/visual systems.

There are only minor outstanding items from the last quinquennial report.

For more information on the finances, please email the treasurer Paul Taylor on [oakacorn@me.com](mailto:oakacorn@me.com)



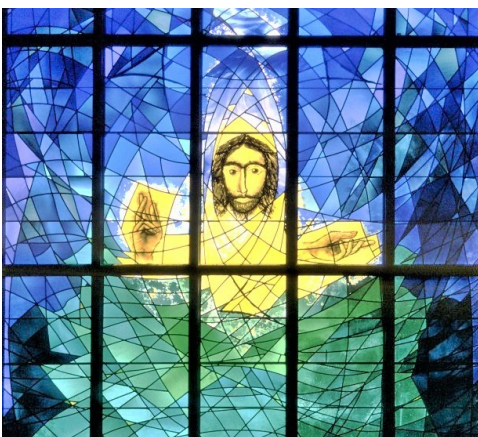
Holy Trinity Church and Community Centre is a busy hub, hosting many encouraging and inspiring community groups and classes throughout the week.

The regular use of the Church and Community Centre offers great opportunities for connecting with the community in terms of mission and outreach. As a benefice, we have embraced opportunities for mission and, in recent years, we have incorporated outreach initiatives alongside some national and international sporting events.

Our regular monthly Tea Party initiative is very much a part of our mission to engage with both our church members and the wider local community. Whilst most of those attending are elderly, children from Holy Trinity Church School come to help serve the afternoon tea. This initiative has a guest speaker for each session.

We support various overseas mission initiatives. Project Return is a registered charity to help families in Vietnam become self-sufficient. The church supports this project financially and through prayer. We also offer our backing to USPG, supporting the churches of the Anglican Communion as they engage in God's holistic mission around the world.

In addition to these overseas mission initiatives, we also contribute to The Lord's Larder, which is an independent local food bank operated by volunteers from churches in and around Yeovil to help those who are in need. We also offer prayer support for Yeovil Street Pastors, Christians Against Poverty, Christian Aid, Oddments Theatre Company and Samaritan's Purse UK. Many of our parishioners give their own time and energy to these causes and we are keen to both develop our overseas mission links and our involvement with local initiatives.



From L-R: the main window by Jon Callan, Christmas activities and a visiting choir

Barwick have come to your attention, and we are looking forward to giving the successful applicant a warm welcome to Yeovil Deanery. The Deanery consists of four parishes in the town, and three rural multi-parish benefices (plus Brympton, which is a very small parish by itself, popular for weddings).

We have friendly relations across the Deanery, and supportive networks through the Chapter, the Synod, and the Deanery Mission and Pastoral Group.

The Chapter meets about eight times a year, so that the local clergy can pray together and encourage each other in our Christian faith, talk through local matters, support each other, catch up on news, and eat together. Our meetings are informal and friendly. Holy Trinity and Barwick have both hosted meetings of our Deanery Synod in the last couple of years.

In the town of Yeovil there are many non-Anglican churches too, and we seek to maintain the best possible links where we can, with Yeovil Community Church, the Vineyard, the Family Church, the Baptist church, the Methodist circuit, and others too. In the last couple of years a 'Church leaders' breakfast' has developed, so that we can get together a few times each year, and pray together. There is a walk of witness each Good Friday, which unites Christians from several churches and denominations.

The Deanery Mission and Pastoral Group developed a Deanery Mission Plan in 2017, as the Diocesan leadership encourages us to 'put mission and evangelism at the heart of all we do'. As a result...

- We have a Deanery Mission Enabler (Rev Ruth Chapman, who is .2 in that role, and .8 in the parish of St. James).
- We are about to welcome our first 'Pioneer' in the large and under-resourced parish of St. Michael's.
- We have a Deanery Prayer Cycle, which enables us to pray for the needs of other local churches, and to keep in touch with what is going on.

And there is always more we can do to further the mission of Christ in the local churches of the Deanery. We'd love you to come and join us, playing your part for the parishes of Holy Trinity and Barwick.

The Revd James Dudley-Smith, Area Dean  
Val Barker, Lay Dean



The Diocese of Bath and Wells is one of 41 Church of England dioceses in the country. The diocese stretches from Portishead in the north to Crewkerne in the south, Minehead in the west to Frome in the east.

Our vision, and the diocesan strategy that is emerging from it, speaks of the story of Jesus; his life, teaching and work, his death and resurrection; the story which is the context of our faith and the content of our message.

We seek **to live** this story as disciples of Jesus Christ in the world and **to tell** it, both in sharing the good news and by the way in which our lives speak about Him.

Bishop Peter's work on a new vision and strategy for the diocese began during his first year as Bishop of Bath and Wells, which he spent visiting parishes and listening.

The diocesan strategy is built around three priorities:

- To place mission and evangelism at the heart of all we do.
- To re-align our resources towards mission.
- To identify, develop and release the gifts of all our people.

This has been developed in a number of areas:

**Deaneries** Each deanery now has a Deanery Mission Plan (DMP) to identify and address priorities for mission in the local area. This has encouraged a lot of collaboration across deaneries in mission and discipleship development. DMPs will continue to be important in the coming years as decisions about resource allocation will be made in the light of what the plans say.

**Pioneering and fresh expressions** Our Pioneer Project (part-funded by the national church) seeks to encourage pioneering across the Diocese to reach those communities where we currently have little impact. Deaneries and parishes are being resourced to develop pioneering within their areas and to encourage the vocation of those who are called to work with people outside the inherited church.

**Lay ministry and vocation** Our priority is to develop the ministry of all God's people, lay and ordained working in partnership. We increasingly emphasise lay leadership and ministry in our diocesan programme, and we are developing new pathways for lay vocations in order to allow this to develop.

The Venerable Anne Gell  
Archdeacon of Wells

## Vacancy prayer

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Heavenly Father,  
During this vacancy,  
guard and grow this Benefice as we serve you together  
in this period without a Priest in Charge.

Lord Jesus,  
We know that you have plans for us  
and that these plans are good.  
We ask now that you will help us to share responsibility,  
grow in faith, love one another, care for those in need,  
reach out to others, and welcome newcomers.

Holy Spirit,  
Please guide those who are seeking the right person for us,  
and those who are seeking the right place for their ministry,  
that together we may discover your way for the future  
and see your kingdom grow.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you would like to visit the benefice or if you have any questions regarding this post. We wish you every blessing as you discern where God is calling you to serve.

Benefice contact details:

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