

March Team Ministry

A new Changing Market Towns Worker in March, engaging with the community in fresh and imaginative ways, and establishing Fresh Expressions of Church

Context

The town of March is served by four Anglican churches in a Team Ministry staffed by two full-time clergy and many voluntary lay and ordained ministers. The Changing Market Towns initiative has added two further workers to date: an Operations Manager (from January 2019) and a Children and Families Worker (from April 2019). We are now seeking to appoint to a third post, focused on imaginative community mission, to join this growing and committed ministry team.

The Diocese of Ely's aspiration is to have as many traditional and Fresh Expressions of Church, and our aim in March is to exceed that target. At present we have four traditional and one fresh, so are looking to create more Fresh Expressions.

We do not have set ideas about the best ways to enable this to happen, and are willing to support a range of initiatives. These may be based on social action, sport, music, or other gatherings. They may be based in people's homes, cafes, social space or in churches or church halls. We wish to meet people where they are and to help them develop their faith and response to God, and are looking for a strong player who is able to use their own specific set of skills to lead in this task.

The Town

March is a Fenland town of about 24,000 people. Traditionally it was a market town, and centre of food production and processing, and a railway town. Today there is a town centre which has a good social feel. Offices of Fenland Council are in the town, and there are four primary and one secondary schools, Library, Community Centres, Sports Centre and sports clubs, some private fitness clubs, three supermarkets, a railway station and several social clubs. There is also a top-security prison built on the site of the old rail marshalling yards. March has been more resilient to the loss of its main employer, British Rail in the 1980s, than many towns dominated by one industry. The agriculture and food production industry has changed from family farms to larger units owned by large companies and operated by contractors. There are several packing factories which employ significant numbers of both local and migrant labour. Many people move to March, either at retirement or to be near family, as house prices are some of the lowest in the region. There are many clubs and organisations for these older generations, and the town welcomes newcomers at all levels. There is some new building of houses, but less than in those towns with access to national transport links.

The Churches

March has four Anglican churches that came together as a Team Ministry in 2015, and the Team Rector has led the team into increasingly shared and town-wide patterns of working. The vision is that each church should have some distinctive characteristics and style so that we appeal to a wider variety of personalities, outlooks and emphases. All four churches have church halls, so the range of spaces available is significant. All churches draw

congregation members from across the whole town, although St John's has slightly more of a local parish focus.

St John's, located near the railway station, and generally the poorer side of town, has been transformed into a buoyant church with effective children's ministry. The hall is becoming a community hub. There are a wide range of activities for children from toddlers to adulthood including Chat-tea which is a community meal served by the youth group. As well as Breakfast Church (Fresh Expression), we are moving towards a monthly Messy Church. There is also a ministry of laying-on of hands.

St Mary's, situated on the edge of the town, and is historically the farmers' church. It was destroyed by arson in 2010, and reopened in 2014. Worship is traditional, and the congregation have a strong sense of belonging.

St Peter's is in the town centre. It is a busy church with many groups who meet for social interaction, and for music and worship. Recently, contact with younger people has declined, perhaps because of different expectations of church schools. There is much potential to be developed, and its location in the centre of town provides opportunities. St Peter's PCC is the legal employer of the Market Town Workers, who work across the town.

St Wendreda's has an evangelical tradition. It has house groups, a beautiful building, and a well-appointed hall. It has found some of the recent changes challenging. There is a vision to strengthen St Wendreda's as an effective Anglican evangelical church, reaching out and valuing the Bible, and it has enormous potential. There is a strong commitment to missionary societies and giving, and a desire to strengthen links with Neale Wade Academy, which is across the road from the church.

PEOPLE

Paid Staff

Team Rector Rev Andrew Smith has been in March since 2015 and has prime pastoral responsibility for St John's, St Mary's and St Peter's as well as overall leadership and support. As well as Sunday services, main roles are baptisms, weddings, funerals and primary schools, along with pastoral care and nurturing and supporting lay people in their ministry. Pamela and Andrew live in the Rectory (with Holly the dog), and are actively involved with their four grandchildren who all live near Peterborough.

Team Vicar and Leader in Mission, currently in transition and with pastoral responsibility for St Wendreda's congregation.

Rebecca Parnell Operations Manager based in St John's hall since January 2019, assisting with delivery, support and accountability of the Market Towns project, and has also transformed our communications with Facebook and other channels.

Karen Pritchard Changing Market Towns Worker with a focus on children and families, since April 2019, and before that the Junior and Youth Club leader at St John's for many years, as her children grew up. Training to be an LLM (Licensed Lay Minister) and developing many ways to connect with children, and through them, adults, to develop faith and discipleship.

YOU? – the new Community Mission Worker, with the gifts and talents, energy and ideas you bring.

*Some of the **Volunteer Ministers***

Rev Jane Rees who assists with worship and study groups, counselling and support

David Harrison Licensed Lay Minister (LLM) at St Peter's and St Mary's

Hannah Taylor LLM at St Peter's and St Mary's

Diane Wise Reader LLM at St John's and healing ministry

Barbara Taylor Reader (LLM) and at St Wendreda's

Rev Anthony Chandler and **Rev Jenny Webb** former Rectors of St Peter's and St Mary's help with worship and pastoral care

Judith Rooke Authorised Lay Minister (ALM), St Peter's Pastoral Care, and Worship

Eva Willox ALM Pastoral Care St Peter's

Linda Walker ALM Pastoral Care, baptism and elderly St Peter's

Jamie Woodcock ALM Pastoral Care and verger St John's

Gary Canham ALM Youth and Children St Wendreda's

Michael Leeden verger St Peter's and team photocopier

Rosemary Fuller verger, churchwarden and occasional preacher St Wendreda's

Beth Letts music, children and youth work St Peter's

Shaun and Anna Godfrey much at St John's church and hall

... and so many more churchwardens, secretaries, treasurers, musicians, editors, organisers, editors, helpers ... for whom we are very grateful