

## North Wilts Mission Area (NWMA)

The North Wilts Mission area (NWMA – pronounced *pneuma*, a Greek word used for the Holy Spirit) is one of three Mission Areas in Bristol Diocese, and the only one to be both coterminous with a Deanery and predominantly rural. It comprises 31 parishes within six benefices, of which Upper Thames is one. The lead incumbent for the Mission Area is the Revd Oliver Ross, Vicar of Malmesbury and Upper Avon. He is supported by Catherine Price, NWMA Mission Enabler. NWMA strategy and joint planning is overseen by the Mission Area Steering Team. Like all incumbents in the Mission Area the post-holder will have a seat on MAST, which meets bi-monthly.

The basis for the Mission Area is a Covenant signed by the Bishop of Swindon, incumbents and congregation members on 22 June 2019. Through the Covenant the six benefices have **committed themselves** to being attentive to what the Holy Spirit is already doing in our churches and communities; to develop a shared strategy for mission and discipleship in North Wiltshire; to support each other in prayer, rejoicing in each other's successes, and sharing in disappointments, and learning together from both; to share resources and expertise generously with each other; and to reach out with the message of the gospel to those outside the church family in the prayerful expectation that God will work in and through us to share His love so that His Kingdom will grow in North Wiltshire. Following the Holy Spirit's lead, we look to be able to welcome many in, and see the body of Christ in each benefice built up in faith and discipleship.

**Our shared vision** is to see the Holy Spirit working powerfully in North Wiltshire; to bring new people into the Kingdom of God; to renew our churches and grow confident followers of Jesus and to be a tangible presence of Jesus Christ in our communities

**We recognise** that we are inheritors of the prayers of the people of God and a tradition of mission that has lasted for well over a thousand years in many of our parishes, and we have committed ourselves to continuing that tradition for the benefit of the generations still to come by seeking to offer the good news about Jesus to our neighbours, so that they may receive Him as Lord and enter the life of the Kingdom; by looking for those things that we can do better together than we can do apart; by offering hope, help and hospitality to our communities and by contributing to the work of the wider church through increased giving and sharing experience.

The COVID-19 pandemic has strengthened the bonds between us, giving us unprecedented opportunities to share resources and expertise, with more experienced incumbents helping less experienced colleagues in tackling the unique challenges posed as churches have closed, re-opened and then closed again. We have been able to run online Alpha and Bible courses, and Retreats at Home which have reached across parish boundaries, and have developed a pattern of monthly shared online worship which supplements the online worship offered by individual benefices.

For a conversation about NWMA, contact Oliver Ross [vicar@malmesburyabbey.com](mailto:vicar@malmesburyabbey.com) 07879 490139 or Catherine Price [catherine@malmesburyabbey.com](mailto:catherine@malmesburyabbey.com) 07889 296214. Visit the [NWMA YouTube channel](#) or our [website](#) for more information.