

# Parish Profile

## Kingsthorpe Team ministry

St John the Baptist, St Mark's, and St David's



### We are looking for a half time team vicar!

We are a parish on the outskirts of Northampton made up of three churches - St John the Baptist (SJB), St Mark's, and St David's. POP 27000+ due to new build.

ER 175, USA 79 (post pandemic) Before the pandemic 125 between 3 churches - SJB 50, St David's 40, St Mark's 35.

This is a eucharistic community, wanting to go forward with despite a number of difficulties. We work very much as a team, and many things are done across the team. This has become more obvious through the pandemic. We have developed several digital meetings using zoom that has brought all three churches together on a regular basis - daily prayer, Compline, Spiritual Communion.

A virtual coffee on zoom has been very popular and people from all three churches have taken part as well as some virtual social activities. House groups, youth group and bible study continued on zoom during the pandemic, and now meet in person as well as continuing online.



We have a thriving MU which again consists of members from each church across the parish and we go into a number of schools twice a term, both lay and clergy led.





Figure 1 St John the Baptist Church

**St John the Baptist** is in the centre of the village area of Kingsthorpe. It is a traditional church with a middle to high tradition. It has a choir connected to the RSCM.

At the moment there is only one service at 10am due to the pandemic. It is eucharistic, with robes. The numbers are going up again, now to 34 whereas before the pandemic it was between 50 -60 on a normal Sunday.

As current restrictions are lifted, we hope to restart children's work within the Sunday service as we had a number of families who attended prior to the pandemic.

Its congregation is made up of various ages including some families with children, however it has a larger amount of older people. As in all the churches, the main need is mission, and growth in depth of faith. This brings opportunity. This will mean more new work in groups that people can go to such as bible studies, or social groups with some form of faith input that they and their friends can be invited to.

There is a core of people at St John the Baptist who want to take it forward. When we do have different activities, especially to raise money the congregation is very supportive.

The chapter house is a building linked to the church and we are at the moment in the process of expanding it. This is a major piece of work but when it is completed it will mean that we will be able both have more groups for the church and also outside groups which will of course help our finances.

St John the Baptist has quite a large ministry in baptism, wedding, and funerals. We gain people and families from all those areas. There is much work to be done in this respect. There would be an expectation that the new team vicar would take their turn in all of these. With post baptism, wedding, and funeral visits as there is not the capacity to do this with the present staffing situation.

St John the Baptist Church has been heavily involved in a number of community activities which encourages a large number of people into church who normally would not attend a regular service. Each summer the large village fete would see many hundreds of people pass through the doors. Similarly, the annual Christmas Tree festival attracted many people over the course of a weekend. Other activities in recent years have been mums and tots, weekly coffee mornings, Brick church, a pet service and an annual Teddy Bears Picnic. Each of these activities have attracted many people from outside of our usual church community.

In order to develop our mission, we have re started Brick Church, and introduced Little Stars, a group for parents and carers and preschool children. The activities at Little Starts include both faith and play.



Figure 2 St David's Church

**St David's** church is in the centre of St David's housing estate. This area is ranked in the top 10% of most deprived areas of England and has many of the challenges associated with deprivation.

The community are very loyal to St David's - before the pandemic it had up to 40 people, however at the moment around 17 are returning on a weekly basis. This is expected to grow as the situation improves. It has to be said that a

large proportion of the congregation don't live on the estate.

There is a mixture of people coming to this church including families and children's work continues here. This is a eucharistic community and has a weekly eucharist, robes are worn.

There is a lot of work with the community including a food bank, a café (which will be reopened when possible.) There is a children's group weekly for all young people across the team, and also Renew 88, a group linked to wellbeing. This meets on a weekly basis and is open to all across the parish and community.

During the last team vicars time there has been a lot of connection to the community, and this had brought much fruit, in a larger congregation and the start of a children's choir. Other groups use the church buildings each evening.

The potential to do more work on the estate is immense, expanding the use of church buildings in the day for groups working with in the community. These groups would be determined by the community.

**St Mark's** church can be found on the Whitehills Estate. It is a modern building, and it has about 35 USA. It has a low /evangelical churchmanship. It has a 10am holy communion service on a Sunday.

The congregation is from children up to the elderly. Some of St Mark's congregation take part in some of the team activities, leading them in some cases, this includes Little Stars. St Mark's has a very active prayer triplet system which works well with all members.



Figure 3 St Mark's Church

There is a great deal of potential for mission on the estates around the St Mark's area however the people of St Mark's have been reluctant to do mission. The whole church needs to take on board the need for everyone to be involved and not just in the building! This hasn't happened in the past and there has been a reliance on the clergy as there has been at St John the Baptist also.

St Mark's has a large hall which has a huge potential for different meetings, groups and activities. It is already used by several groups which give a steady income. In the past there was a large mums and tots group which was very successful but sadly when the leader left no one would take over. Requests have been made for something similar to recommence. This was also the same situation with the men's group. This was thriving but again when the leader left there was no one to take over. The men's group has now recommenced, led by one of the curates, as well as a lunch time opportunity for those working to have a break and a light lunch.

## In conclusion

It has been said that this is a hard parish to work and I agree with that statement. Most of the three congregations are happy to be led and to go to certain groups that are put on for them, but other than a few they do not want to lead or take responsibility. The parish as a whole does not have a volunteering ethos. This is the case even when we have encouraged mission and leadership for 11 years.

I have a lay team consisting of 2 curates, 1 lay reader, 2 Lay pastoral ministers, 1 evangelist.

Kingsthorpe Team Ministry is a busy parish with much potential unrealised. We would welcome a half time priest came to work in achieving more across the parish.



*Figure 4 St David's House, Eastern Avenue*