

# The Parish Profile

For the United Benefice of Harrington & Distington  
In West Cumbria

A New Rector for St. Mary's, Harrington  
& The Church of the Holy Spirit, Distington.



Harrington congregation



Distington congregation

**Are you Called to be our New Rector?**

Our Aspiration: - To be a beacon and the hub of our communities.

Our Vision: - To be vibrant, growing and united churches, reaching out to the wider community so they may witness Christ at work and want to share in that.

Our Key Mission Opportunities: - Active engagement in the local communities, occasional offices, engagement with scouts and other local uniformed organisations, toddler's groups for families, a well-being café and on-line streamed services.

## Who Are We?

### The team: -

- ◆ *Rector*
- ◆ *Part time associate minister, the Rev'd Alison Riley, who is also Network Youth Church Minister for Calder Deanery.*
- ◆ *Reader, Richard Wilkinson, who is also a Chaplain at West Cumberland Hospital and Whitehaven Rugby Club. He is currently exploring the possibility of ordination.*
- ◆ *Lay Minister, Ruth Illman, who has joined us from North Lincolnshire where she was an Authorised Lay Minister. Ruth works for Cumbria County Council as an Educational Psychologist. She is currently exploring the possibility of ordination.*
- ◆ *2 x Hard working PCCs*
- ◆ *For our strong tradition in music –*
  - *2 x Organists*
  - *2 x Church choirs*
  - *2 x Occasional guitarists at Harrington*
- ◆ *'The Tuesday Gang', a group of volunteer parishioners who carry out maintenance of Harrington church, hall and grounds*
- ◆ *Two teams of volunteer parishioners who clean, make teas & coffees, read, lead intercessions, run toddler groups and assist in the preparation of services and functions*



The Covid Lockdown Worship Team

## Workington Mission Community

The Diocese of Carlisle is committed to the **God for All** vision (<https://godforall.org.uk>). Launched in 2015, it is underpinned by a commitment across four denominations in Cumbria to grow God's Kingdom through the development of ecumenical Mission Communities. The vision is based on four values: Follow Daily (helping each other to follow Jesus more closely); Care Deeply (listening to our communities to serve them and to challenge injustice); Speak Boldly (sharing our faith in Jesus in everyday ways); and Tread Gently (seeking to sustain and renew the life of the earth).

Mission Communities are the way in which the Church in Cumbria seeks to live out this vision. They are deeply collaborative: traditional ministries and forms of church, working intimately alongside innovative and pioneering expressions. They are collaborative between denominations, between clergy and laity, and between different communities. The ability to work collaboratively and ecumenically, as well as the ability to encourage all believers to discover their calling and use their gifts in ministry is essential to a thriving ministry in a Mission Community context.

Harrington and Distington belong to the Workington Mission Community, sitting at the southern end of it. The present incumbent is the acting Mission Community Leader and it is expected that the person appointed to this role will have the potential to be appointed Mission Community Leader. Subject to your gifts and calling, the role of Rural Dean of Solway is also available for consideration.

## Who are we Looking For?

### The Leader we need

Is someone who is prayerful and open to the leading of the Holy Spirit and who will help us to: -

- ◆ *Be more prayerful*
- ◆ *Grow in our faith*
- ◆ *Be filled with joy as we express our faith*
- ◆ *Identify our strengths and encourage us to build on them*
- ◆ *Identify our weaknesses and make them strengths*
- ◆ *Engage with all ages in our community*
- ◆ *Reach out to those in need*

### The Skills we are looking for: -

- ◆ *Someone who will listen, understand and love our communities for who we are*
- ◆ *The ability to make Church life joyful*
- ◆ *A confident and effective communicator to people of all ages and socio-economic backgrounds*
- ◆ *Someone down-to-earth and able to relate to people on their level*
- ◆ *A natural collaborator and encourager*
- ◆ *Ability to teach effectively*
- ◆ *Ability to do traditional ministry (such as funerals and baptisms) really well, but also able to innovate, seeing both as integral to mission*
- ◆ *Flexibility of approach, able to consult & work with others' ideas, to adapt to circumstances and to foster a mutual sense of endeavour*
- ◆ *Someone willing to be part of us - to love and be loved*
- ◆ *Ability to mentor team members*

### Mission Opportunities at a Glance

There are many opportunities in these communities for a person of spiritual endeavour to make a difference. More below, but briefly:

- ◆ *Recent new forms of worship and outreach*
- ◆ *Good links with schools, Scouts and the Lakes College*
- ◆ *Occasional offices that still reach deep into the community*
- ◆ *A developing online presence*
- ◆ *An excellent Church hall in Harrington for multi-purpose use*

### **Where are we?**

Harrington is on the west coast of Cumbria, and Distington is slightly inland from Harrington. Both villages are on the south side of Workington. The parish of Harrington includes High Harrington and Salterbeck, whilst the parish of Distington includes Pica and Gilgarran. Both have areas of affluence and deprivation. Detail of the county and district profiles can be found here: <https://www.cumbriaobservatory.org.uk/county-district-profiles/>

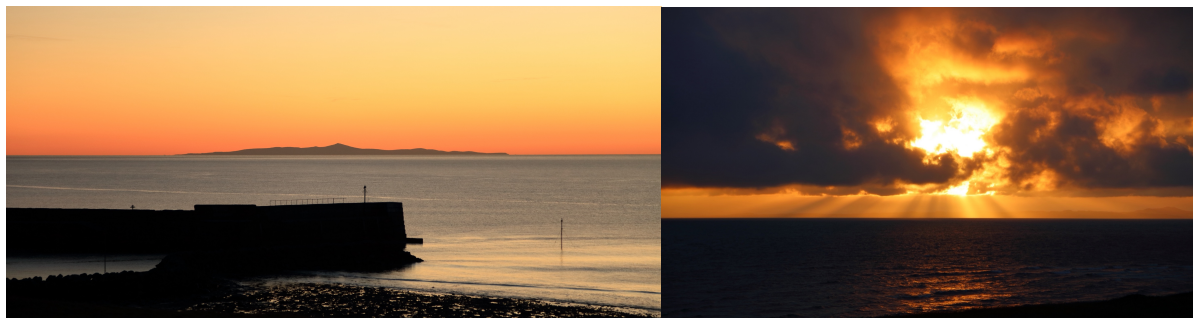
There is a regular train service from Harrington Station, north to Carlisle and south to Barrow-In-Furness, a regular bus service between Harrington

& Distington and of course, there is easy access to the Lake District National Park.



Perhaps unusually for a post-industrial area, we have a very strong sense of community and this post would suit someone who enjoys being at the heart of a community. The communities in the main, are people who have remained local all their lives. We are a resilient people, who have seen major industries close down in the area in recent history and a great deal of adjustment has been accommodated. The current main employer in the area is Sellafield Ltd, who are responsible for decommissioning the Nuclear installation there.

Our communities are very friendly and welcoming. Harrington has a growing community with many new housing developments emerging and Distington has a village feel with a strong community spirit. People who come to us from outside the local area often fall deeply in love with us and don't want to leave.



Harrington harbour at sunset with the Isle of Man in the distance, and looking towards Dumfriesshire, Scotland.

## What Are We About?

### Our Regular Services and Activities: -

REGULAR SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES							
Week	Harrington					Distington	
	Sunday 10:30	Monday 10:00	Thursday 09:30	Friday 19:00	Saturday	Sunday 09:15	Wednesday
1	Holy Communion	Pram Club (Term Time)	Holy Communion			Family Worship	Toddlers (Term Time). 14:00 Wellbeing Café
2	Family Worship or Parade Service. 18:00 Healing Service	Pram Club (Term Time)	Holy Communion			Holy Communion	Toddlers (Term Time). 14:00 Wellbeing Café
3	Holy Communion	Pram Club (Term Time)	Holy Communion		16:00 Messy Marys	Church in the Afternoon at 15:00	Toddlers (Term Time). 14:00 Wellbeing Café
4	Holy Communion	Pram Club (Term Time)	Holy Communion	Film Club	09:30 Men's Breakfast	Holy Communion	Toddlers (Term Time). 14:00 Wellbeing Café

### Our Special Occasion Services: -

OCCASIONAL OFFICES								
Year	Harrington				Distington			
	Baptisms	Weddings	Funerals	Comments	Baptisms	Weddings	Funerals	Comments
2019	55	3	40	Plus one wedding blessing	16	2	19	
2020	15	1	80	Affected by pandemic	2	2	25	Affected by pandemic
2021	42	8	66	Affected by pandemic	18	0	17	Affected by pandemic

Baptisms are usually taken outside of the main service. They are well attended, joyous occasions and provide an excellent opportunity to engage with the wider community. It is therefore important to us that we operate an open Baptism policy, seeing it as a welcoming service with an invitation to the Toddlers and Messy Mary's groups. We follow up our baptisms with Christmas Cards.

We have a very good funeral ministry, which also provides a means to engage deeply with the wider community to show them our empathy and understanding and a means for continued spiritual support. Our Memorial Services at All Souls is also very well attended, with each bereaved family for the previous four years receiving a personal invitation.

Confirmation is a joint service each year, where we also join with other churches in the Mission Community. Both churches have passed resolutions to allow children to take communion before confirmation.

Remembrance Services at both churches are important civic and community events.

Both churches are open at specific times for prayer and quiet time.

We deliver Benefice Christmas and Easter cards to each house in the two parishes, and both churches are particularly well attended at the Christmas Eve Crib services and the Christingle services.

Our Community Activities: -



Distington's PCC



Harrington's PCC



Coffee Morning at Distington Methodist Chapel



Refreshments after Communion  
in Harrington Church Hall



The Renew Wellbeing Café



Messy Mary's



Harrington Pram Club



Distington Toddlers Group



Members of the 'Tuesday Gang' at work



Film Club

### Our Church Links With The Wider Community: -

We have a very active, 'Churches Together', group for Workington & District. Historically we have had good relationships with the Scout Association, including Beavers, Cubs, Scouts and Explorers. There are six parade services each year, with each section of the association leading two of them.

We have established very good links with local schools and a college. The incumbent was on the Board of Governors at Beckstone Primary School, Harrington for nine years and is the Chair of the Board of Governors at Distington School. Both are community schools. Distington School would very much like the new Rector to be a Governor.

The incumbent also takes occasional Assemblies and the schoolchildren attend church at the Harvest Festival, Christmas and on special event days such as Experience Easter.

The incumbent goes into three local Residential Care Homes to take Communion and is Chaplain at the Lakes College of Further & Higher Education, which is in the Benefice.

Community links are also strengthened through our Parish Magazine.




## How We Are Working Towards Our Vision: -

### Newly Started During Lockdown

- ◆ *On-line streamed services - A means to reach everyone when Covid prevented people from attending church. We now continue to stream for a regular on-line church community*
- ◆ *Renew Wellbeing Café – offering a safe space of welcome where it's OK not to be OK, with prayer (it began on Zoom, but now they meet in person).*

### Restarted Since Restrictions Have Eased

- ◆ *Messy Mary's -  Messy Church, with games, crafts, worship & food*
- ◆ *Film Club – A monthly opportunity for the community to come together and share in the enjoyment of a movie*
- ◆ *Men's Breakfast – For the men in our community to share stories and experiences over a good old Full English Breakfast*
- ◆ *Toddler's groups – For families and their children to come together to chat and play. Harrington has a long-established group, whilst Distington's is just a few years old.*
- ◆ *Book Club – An opportunity to exchange books and discuss their merits*
- ◆ *Crafty Mary's - For adults to bring their crafts and enjoy each other's company whilst working on their craft endeavours*
- ◆ *Church-in-the-Hall – An occasional family service in a relaxed café-style environment, with the service projected on a screen and everyone given opportunities to get more involved in the service*
- ◆ *Church-in-the-Afternoon - An Iona-style Communion service at Distington, followed by refreshments*
- ◆ *Bible Studies - Including Lent Studies and an Alpha Course*
- ◆ *Church Magazine - Another means to send out the message and connect with the wider community.*

### Planning To Restart Soon

- ◆ *Soup on Saturday - A regular opportunity for the community to come together and chat over a delicious bowl of hot soup*

### Our Next Steps: -

- ◆ *'Sweaty Mary's or Muddy Church - An opportunity to cater for those children who have outgrown Messy Mary's, to give them something physically challenging and/or more aligned to their interests*
- ◆ *Lazy Sunday - This was a monthly café in the Distington Community Centre with thought for the day and prayer stations, run by a former pioneer curate. We want this to start again*
- ◆ *Women's Get-Together - An opportunity for the women of the community to come together and share stories, experiences and worship following closure of the Mother's Union branches during lockdown*

### Our Challenges:

- ◆ *To encourage a larger group of people into Lay Ministry*
- ◆ *To increase our engagement with families by creating provisions for children at services*
- ◆ *To make provision for older children to grow in faith when they have outgrown Messy Mary's*
- ◆ *The need to build on the relationship with the adults who come to the Toddler groups*
- ◆ *To develop our bereavement and wellbeing support by becoming one of the Healthy Healing Hubs in the diocese*
- ◆ *To develop our follow up activity for baptism and funeral contacts by building pastoral teams*
- ◆ *To continue to build relationships with schools (post Lockdown), e.g., Experience Easter*

### Our website and YouTube channel: -

- ◆ <https://www.stmarys-harrington-and-holyspirit-distington.co>
- ◆ [https://youtube.com/channel/UCWVCzPENNVkbnUh\\_d77CV0A](https://youtube.com/channel/UCWVCzPENNVkbnUh_d77CV0A)

### Our FaceBook Pages: -

- ◆ <https://www.facebook.com/StMarysOnTheHillHarrington/>
- ◆ <https://www.facebook.com/holyspiritdistington/>

### Finances

The management of our finances is in good order, thanks to the work of two very competent Finance officers. For copies of our accounts, please contact [annbrown2429@gmail.com](mailto:annbrown2429@gmail.com) (Harrington) and [doreenbelford@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:doreenbelford@yahoo.co.uk) (Distington).

### Governance

We have two lively, committed PCCs, each with Lay Chairs. They work well together. There is much collective wisdom and a real sense of fun among our members.

### Safeguarding

We take our Safeguarding responsibilities very seriously and are fortunate to have an excellent Parish Safeguarding Officer, with a professional background in the field, who operates across both parishes.

### Infrastructure

The overall condition of the buildings and grounds is good. Copies of the latest Quinquennial reports are available for both churches.



Harrington St. Mary's Church

At Harrington church the east window is in need of renovation. The remaining windows have recently been/are being renovated. Upkeep of the church benefits from a volunteer group within the church community.



Distington Church of the Holy Spirit

At Distington church two new efficient gas boilers have been installed. The church facilities include a toilet and kitchen.

Both churches are Grade II listed buildings. They both have open churchyards and Harrington also has two closed churchyards, maintained by the council. These are Commonwealth War Grave churchyards, one of which has a war memorial, used during Remembrance services. Both open

churchyards have been granted money for re-wilding, i.e., to seed given areas with wild flowers to encourage the presence of bees.



Harrington Church Hall

With respect to the other buildings, the church hall at Harrington is in good condition, with a stage, kitchen and toilet facilities and plans have been drawn up to extend the building further. The hall is used for many activities, such as Pram Club, Film Club and Messy Mary's.

At Distington, the church has use of the Old Chapel, a former Methodist Chapel that is now part of a joint project between the Anglican and Methodist churches. The chapel currently hosts a Wellbeing Café, as well as coffee mornings and occasional family services. During lockdown it was used for the village Fare-Share scheme.



The Benefice House

The Benefice house is a purpose-built rectory with four bedrooms, good off-road parking and a very large garden with room for a vegetable patch. There has been a Quinquennial inspection carried out in 2022 and work has begun on the actions arising from the inspection.

### Quotes from Parishioners

“What I love about St Mary's is that being part of the church doesn't always mean going to church for an hour on Sunday Morning. It's about finding the part of church that suits you. Personally, I love being a scout leader, messy helper, flower arranger, PCC member, film clubber, crafter and tea drinker”, - Ellen B.

“The film club is held monthly in a great venue with plenty of parking. We have watched a variety of films and always enjoy the company. Everyone welcome”, - Tony J.

“I really like the sense of community at St. Mary’s. It means I can find joy in praying with like-minded friends, singing with them and enjoying social activities with them too”, - Graham M.

“I love playing the organ at St Mary’s as I feel that I’m aiding the Church community in worship, which is exhilarating”, - James M.

“What I love about my church [*Distington*]: I love the varied worship, the friendly atmosphere, the people, the sense of belonging and the music”, - Barbara L.

“I like going to church because I like the singing and stories and I like getting some bread from Julia!” - Elsie A, aged 5.

"I love everything at Messy's; the craft activities I choose, the grown-ups who help me, the delicious hot food, the stories and the singing. I don't want to miss going." - Isabella, aged 8.

“I would like a Vicar who makes the services easy to understand. Our family church sermons often have interactions with the congregation and also sweets or prizes!” - Neve F.

On being asked which church activities matter to you and your family, Sarah replied, “Toddlers, social events, Christmas services - Christingle, Carols by Candlelight and the Crib service as they involve everyone, children dress up and read, and school attends and more from the village”. Sarah’s toddler, Marcy added, “More choc’ bingo”.

“The Renew Wellbeing cafe is most enjoyable. I understand it as a chance for people who live alone, or who need company for an hour a week, to meet in a relaxing situation, amongst those who are friendly, uncritical, understanding and willing to listen to whatever I might want to share of my week, my situation, my worries, or my good news. The tea and cakes are wonderful, there's laughter aplenty, and a prayer at the end in which our concerns are put into God's hands. I'm certain everyone feels affirmed. I'm glad to go and feel all the better for having gone”, - Susan FE.