

Curacy profile



Welcome



Welcome to the North Westmorland benefice. We are a group of different churches, serving a modest population spread over a significant area, but we are well-organised, innovative and actively exploring what it means to be rural church.

We are privileged to embrace two National Parks, with both a northerly section of the North Yorkshire Moors and a large chunk of Lake District around Haweswater in our care, as well as a section of the beautiful and distinctive Eden Valley. All this overlooked by the North Pennines AONB.

Our northern boundary on the River Eamont adjoins Penrith, meaning that we have excellent shopping, road and rail links within a sensible drive, the best of both worlds.

We are part of the Heart of Westmorland Mission Community, alongside two other large benefices based on Appleby and Kirkby Stephen. We operate a central system of administration for many purposes (including weddings,

funerals and memorial applications). We have ministers who are licensed across the deanery, and our Priests in Charge are all licensed as Assistant Priest in the other benefices of the Mission Community.

In our benefice, we are fortunate to have an Associate Priest, a retired Bishop and other clergy, a Distinctive Deacon, a Director of Music based in Morland, and several readers. There is tremendous variety and experience of ministry both locally and from further afield available to us.

We work closely with our ecumenical partners, primarily the Kirkby Stephen and Appleby Methodist Circuit, which is coterminous with the Deanery and Mission Community.

Our benefice comprises about one-third of the largest deanery in England by area. It is also in the smallest 10% by population, making it rural by any definition. We have 13 Anglican churches, of which 10 are in regular use. The remaining 3 are isolated from any settlement but of outstanding historical significance. St Ninian's and St Wilfrid's are well-preserved examples among only four churches built in England during the Commonwealth and Protectorate. They are in the care of the Churches Conservation Trust. A third church (St Michael's, Lowther) is on the Lowther Castle Estate and is soon to be leased to the Estate Trust for its care and maintenance.

There is change-ringing at Bampton and Shap. A robed choir and nationally-recognised annual choir camp maintain the choral tradition at Morland.

We have three Church of England primary schools and three maintained primary schools. The majority of our population lives in small villages, hamlets or isolated dwellings, with Shap the largest settlement.

Our buildings and finances are in good shape and most of our churches have open churchyards, some with plans to extend. The Cumbrian traditions of burial and grave space reservation are strong here, and much-valued in the community.

The occasional offices are also valued throughout the area. We have a number of wedding venues within our bounds, including Askham Hall, and a first-rate funeral facility, Eden Valley Crematorium, in Cliburn parish.

We are already busy, with plenty of opportunities for a well-rounded and diverse curacy. There is also a great deal more that could be developed here, so plenty of opportunities for a curate to experiment, according to their particular gifts and interests.

Most of our congregations occupy a central place in the Church of England, generally using Order One Communion, but very open to variation and to special services exploring different traditions and styles. A Messy

Church operates at Morland, and a Café Church at Bampton.

The Daily Office and other liturgy from Common Worship is welcomed, as well as the Celtic traditions of the Iona and Northumbria communities, Taizé and, in the older churches, the BCP.

There are generally between 5 and 9 services in the benefice each Sunday, one midweek morning prayer and one midweek communion. On fifth Sundays and special occasions, a single joint benefice service is held. We are exploring the tension between being a church which is intimately connected to its locality and treasured buildings, and the benefits of scale from being a gathered church across a wider area.

Ministering in these beautiful surroundings is a privilege, but as rural Christians, we are *few* and *far between*.

Even when our percentage churchgoing is high, our absolute numbers can still be relatively small.

We invite you to continue your formational journey here with us, experiencing the diversity of rural ministry in a community that is proud of its history and tradition, but open to new things.



The grandeur of the Dent family's church at St Lawrence, Crosby Ravensworth. Here, in the Westmorland Dales, the community has not only reopened its once closed church, but now provides exhibition space, kitchen and WC for the use of tourists and other visitors.

Perfectly-preserved interior at St Ninian's, Brougham.



Our churches

Landscape



Above: The commute to work. Driving down to St Ninian's for Evensong.

Among the significant historical connections in our landscape is Lady Anne Clifford (1590-1676), whose work can be seen at St Ninian's, St Wilfrid's, Brougham Castle and a number of other local landmarks.

A cluster of English Heritage properties is found in Clifton and Shap parishes, while the C20th history of Haweswater Reservoir is treasured at Bampton (which also has a rare example of a parish library still in its original parish setting).

Below: Developing our ministry to visitors. Exhibition space at Crosby Ravensworth.



Lowther Castle in Askham, and its surrounding parkland, attracts significant number of visitors. In various parts of the benefice, our potential ministry to tourists visiting the historic buildings, wild landscape and nature reserves, is an opportunity waiting to be explored.



Messy Church in Morland Village Hall where, with our Network Youth Church minister, we have recently started a youth group for young people from Y6 upwards.



Palm Sunday in Askham.



A church service in school, Shap. Our school links are strong and our relationships with headteachers and staff excellent.



Visiting our churchyard. Younger children visit church from two of schools for JAM (Jesus and me) sessions, run by volunteers.



A school service in church, Shap.

Young people

Working to reach the next of generation of Christians is a key priority for us, and a continuously developing part of our mission.

At the time of writing our ministry looks like this:

- Regular collective worship in our three church primary schools, and occasional assemblies in our maintained schools
- Supporting primary curriculum activities, not only in RE but other subjects, and providing volunteer resource for school trips, Forest School and similar activities
- A youth group with Network Youth Church in Morland once a week during term time, with an annual weekend away
- Monthly 'Jesus and Me' (JAM) sessions to nursery and reception children at Morland School
- Messy Church one Sunday a month in Morland
- An annual village service, with the school, in Shap
- Governance and pastoral support to headteachers and staff at all our schools, and in the secondary schools into which they feed

We are currently developing:

- JAM sessions with two further schools
- A second youth group with Network Youth Church, in Shap
- New volunteers to support the work of our ministers
- A greater variety of worship suitable for families
- Baptism and wedding ministry and follow-up

We are proud of the extensive contact that we have with young people, but know that there is much more we can achieve: to reach every community in the benefice; to form lasting relationships with parents as well as children; and to ensure that there are a range of opportunities (including fresh expressions of church) for our young people and their families to approach God through Jesus Christ.

We are fortunate to have good contacts with the Diocesan Board of Education, through Charlotte Tudway, and congregations who give strong support to the work of our ministers and volunteers in this area of ministry.

Ministerial team

One of the strengths of our benefice is a large ministerial team of varied backgrounds and talents. We have a strong record of recognising and nurturing vocations, and we are greatly blessed by our active retired clergy. Our ministry team includes:



Revd Stephen Tudway

Stephen, our Priest-in-Charge, arrived in January 2023. By coincidence, he undertook a placement in one of our predecessor benefices while training, and has a great affection for the area.



Rt Revd James Bell

Bishop James was Bishop of Ripon until his retirement in 2017. He was Chair of the Church of England Rural Affairs Group for a number of years.



Revd Sheila Clark

Sheila is a former teacher and long-time resident of our area. In retirement she is active in every part of church life and has particular care for a number of our smaller congregations.



Revd Sandy Pearl

Another long-time resident of our area, Sandy is a Distinctive Deacon with a strong ministry in the care of the elderly and in pastoral projects across the Mission Community.



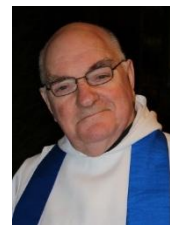
Revd Jon Russell

Jon is a retired rural vicar, most recently rector of three parishes in the north pennines for eighteen years. He has a particular interest in narrative preaching and fellwalking, but not at the same time.

Our lay teams are strong throughout most of the benefice, with experienced churchwardens, treasurers and other PCC members. Our parish share meets the cost of our stipendiary ministry in full.

Revd Kenneth Boyd

Kenneth is a Professor of Medical Ethics, Church of Scotland minister, and part-time resident in our benefice.



Elaine Allison

Elaine has been a local lay minister since 2013. As well as leading worship, she is deeply involved in local events and charities, and is 'mother hen' to the residents of the sheltered housing where she lives.



Neil Hughes

Neil was first licensed as a Reader in the Diocese of London in 1998 and moved to Cumbria two years later. A former teacher of EFL, he is currently a Councillor on the Westmorland & Furness authority.



David Jones

David was brought up a Methodist and first appointed as an organist in the Church of England in 1963. He was licensed as a Reader in 2003 and is currently our Director of Music and a PCC lay vice-chair.



Diana Nicholson

Diana was brought up in the Church of England and licensed as a Reader in 1976. She has a background in children's work and family services in various churches, and currently helps with Open the Book.



Joyce Keetley

As well as being active in her own parish and leading worship, Joyce is the Office Manager for our Mission Community. She clerks synod and chapter, and administers weddings, funerals and memorials.



Rachel Milburn

Rachel worships in Brough church, and is our Network Youth Church minister. She leads a range of youth groups and ministries in our secondary schools and works with Stephen on local youth ministry. Rachel has recently been selected to train for ordination.



Revd Dan and Revd Kristy Pattimore

Dan and Kristy are our deanery pioneer ministers, based in Kirkby Thore, supporting a range of ministries for all ages, across the Mission Community.



Revd Stephen Radford and Revd Andrew Sterling

We work closely in many areas of mission and ministry with our Methodist Superintendent, Stephen, and his colleague Andrew.



Our curate

We seek a curate who is:

- ♦ Walking humbly with God and looking to learn alongside others
- ♦ Open to a collegial working environment, based on mutual respect, openness and loyalty
- ♦ Deeply committed to rural ministry and multi-parish benefices
- ♦ Imaginative and self-starting, ready to work with support, together and alone, on existing ministries and on new things
- ♦ Prepared to 'muck in' with all that needs to be done
- ♦ Seeking a supportive environment in which their own gifts and ideas will be valued and given the opportunity and resources to develop as the curacy progresses
- ♦ Comfortable with digital communication and ministry
- ♦ Willing to work across churches of different traditions
- ♦ Flexible and able to accommodate change
- ♦ Ready to support our ministries to young people on Sunday, in schools, and through youth work, while recognising the needs of many older members of our churches, and the buildings they value
- ♦ Comfortable with traditional and contemporary forms of worship, open to fresh expressions and ministry to visitors and tourists
- ♦ Interested in mission community initiatives and ministries, such as Renew Wellbeing Café, Filling Station and Healthy Healing Hub
- ♦ Able to drive and ready to travel significant distances within our benefice and deanery
- ♦ Willing to become integrated into many distinct communities
- ♦ Able to observe the highest standards confidentiality, care for vulnerable people, and willing to work with our benefice Safeguarding Co-ordinator and Parish Safeguarding Officers to ensure that everyone is safe from harm
- ♦ Ready to have fun while serving God!

Housing



Our curate will be housed in Shap vicarage, a good-sized parsonage house next to Shap churchyard and within a very short walk of the amenities of the village.

Shap, with over 1000 residents and recently added to the benefice, has a welcoming Church of England Primary School,

excellent Co-Op and other shops, sits on the A6 and has its own nearby junction to the M6. There are numerous community organisations and activities for families with children.

Stephen is conveniently located in Morland vicarage, a 15-minute drive away across the central part of the benefice.



Ecumenical outdoor worship with local Methodists, on a cool April day.

Your training minister will be the Revd Stephen Tudway, Priest in Charge here since January 2023.

Before coming to the North Westmorland Benefice, Stephen was Priest in Charge of the parishes of Kirkby and Ireleth and Broughton & Duddon, in the far south west of Cumbria. His patch stretched from sea level to just short of the highest point in England.

Despite coming from a largely non-churchgoing background, Stephen had a sense of vocation to ministry as a child. His early experiences of church were through school and college chaplaincy, Portsmouth and Oxford Cathedrals. He spent 16 formative years in an open evangelical parish in Hertfordshire, where he served as Treasurer and Churchwarden among other ministries. His curacy was served in two Anglo-Catholic parishes. He values diversity in the church and believes that God has made us to know him in many different ways.

“I was ordained in St Albans after 20 years practising as a barrister, specialising in Information Technology disputes. In my former life, I was involved in recruitment and training for my Chambers and, latterly, for the litigation department of the law firm where I spent my last years of legal practice, while training part-time for ministry.

I am married to Charlotte, who is the Diocesan Director of Education here in Carlisle Diocese. Our children are now 19 and 22.



Training minister

I want to be part of a welcoming church, inclusive of all and nurturing the ministries of all. I am excited by the possibilities of Mission Communities for sustaining the rural church, but I am realistic about the challenges that we will encounter on the way. I am committed to the church as a vehicle for social and environmental action; to its role in education; and to working ecumenically. Cumbria is a special place to be church with a deeply-rooted local aspect that everyone can see. I am also passionate about our mission to tourist visitors who may, around the fells that inspired Wordsworth, be especially open to things spiritual.

My title parish was in rural Hertfordshire, where we carefully observed Plough Sunday with the aid of a Victorian plough that was kept in the church. I look back on my curacy with huge fondness. My training incumbent was a great friend to me. We trusted and valued each other, though we were very different people. He welcomed my particular gifts, shared his with me, gave me freedom to explore, and supported me in the things I found difficult or needed to learn. We shared everything, while still affording each other the space to develop our particular gifts as individuals. I want you to have a curacy as rewarding as I did. I hope that you will leave here full of joy in serving Christ, realistic about the challenges, and above all, well-prepared to meet them.”

In his spare time, Stephen enjoys maintaining and modifying his trusty Land Rover, written off on the day of his ordination and brought back from the dead. He loves history, folklore, books, France, walking, and the Cumbrian landscape.

Arrange a visit ...

Why not visit us, to see whether our context is right for the next stage of your ministerial formation?

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