



The CHURCHES of EGREMONT, BIGRIGG
with MOOR ROW, THORNHILL & HAILE

PARISH PROFILE
MARCH 2024



'HELLO'

Thank you for your interest in the role of Team Vicar in Egremont and Haile Benefice. My name is Reverend Becky Gibbs and I am Team Rector* of the benefice and Priest in Charge of St Bees Priory. I have been living in the area for the last seven years and was appointed as Team Rector last September.

The west coast of Cumbria is a really special place, with mountains to the east, the Irish sea to the west and lakes in all directions; we are surrounded by beauty and opportunities for adventure.

We are blessed with good and outstanding schools, a newly developed hospital and opportunities for community involvement and volunteering.

Our churches have had a few challenging years and Covid hit us hard. After a period of mourning and healing we are now ready to move forward and embrace a refreshed vision for the benefice and we would love for you to think about joining us.

Read on to find out more about our churches, the people, the area and what what we are looking for in our new Team Vicar.

And do get in touch if you would like to visit or have a chat over the phone,

Grace and peace, Becky.



(*Team Rector designate – pending completing of pastoral reorganisation)

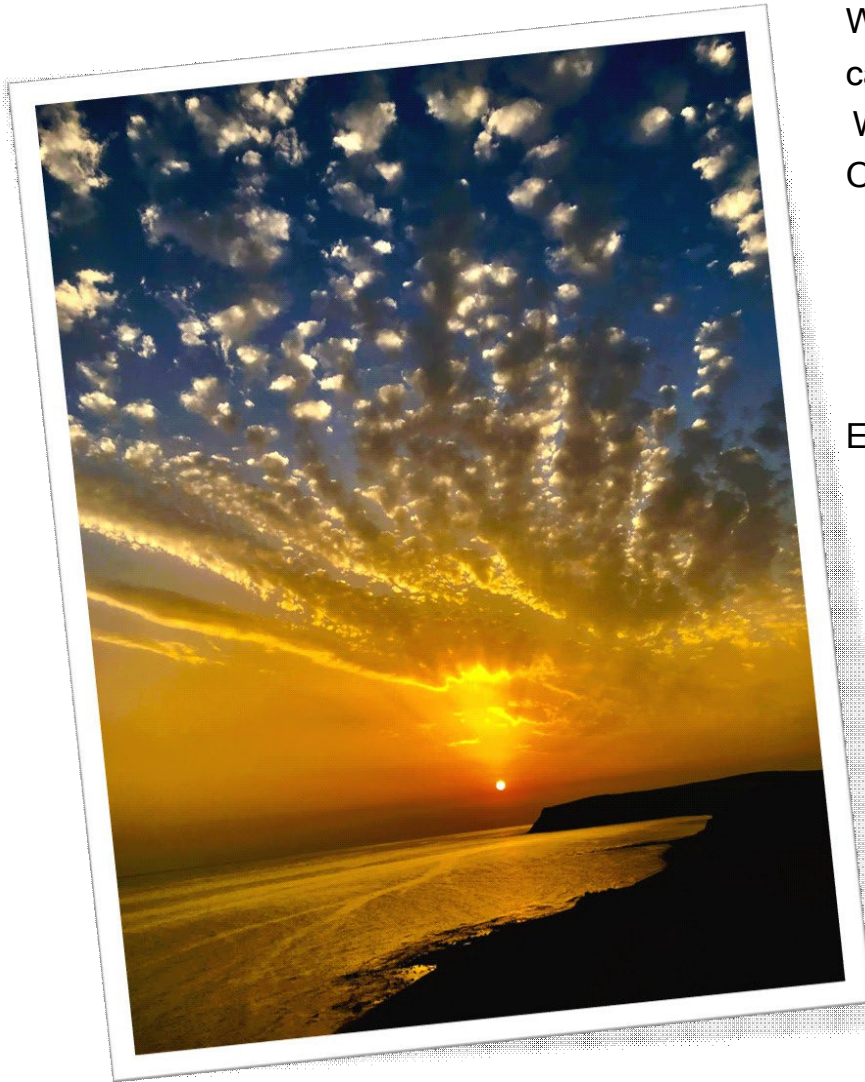


'TWIXT FELLS & SEA





ANOTHER HELLO – FROM OUR WARDENS & PCC



Welcome to the Benefice of Egremont & Haile and thank you for considering if God is calling you to work with us.

We are a group of 4 Churches that are nestled between the fells and coast of West Cumberland ranging from 4 – 12miles from Whitehaven:

- * St John's Church Bigrigg
- * St Mary & St Michael's Parish Church Egremont
- * Haile Parish Church
- * Thornhill Mission

Each of our Churches is rich in its history, its welcome and its love.

Our numbers have become small of late and we so want to see our Churches grow in spirituality and numbers and also to continue to be relevant to the Benefice community.

We have jostled with change and challenge for some time and have not always been adequately organised to be able to refresh our mission and vision. That shortcoming is recognised and we are truly committed to taking the next steps in our journey working for the Lord and the Benefice.

We have recently been blessed with a new part-time Team Rector and the promise of a Curate, and now look for the grace of a Team Vicar to a complete our Ministry Team; to hold, guide and support us as we embrace this change.

Moving forward will not be without further challenge- but we look forward to rekindling the Light of Christ in our community.



and HELLO FROM THE BENEFICE

God for All 





US (how we describe ourselves) & YOU



God for All



THE ROLE OF TEAM VICAR

ROLE DESCRIPTION

We are seeking a Team Vicar who will journey with us in faith; hold, guide and support us, as we embrace the challenges and opportunities to be more Christlike in the community.

With the Team Rector and the PCC our Team Vicar will work to;

- develop and promote the vision of the benefice;
- lead us into deeper spirituality;
- grow the church through new forms of worship and witness;
- listen to, and enable more connections with, the local community and under-represented groups;
- encourage commitment and give support to initiatives that help us to care for the local environment and the wider planet.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

We are seeking a Priest who is :

- an effective communicator;
- a team player who also works collaboratively;
- empathetic, kind and encouraging;
- friendly and approachable; meets people where they are now;
- an effective listener; prayerful and considerate;
- enthusiastic to see growth both in number but also in faith;
- sympathetic to, and embraces varying styles of worship, from - the traditional to a more relaxed style of all age service; and blessed with a sense of humour.

WHAT WE CAN OFFER

- a warm and welcoming church family;
- a desire to grow in faith;
- an emerging recognition of the need for change;
- ongoing and active support from our Archdeacon, Rural Dean, Team Rector, Curate, retired clergy and emerging lay leaders;
- all churches in a good state of repair;
- sound finances with resources to support new initiatives;
- a beautiful part of the world to live in;
- a spacious and attractive home;
- good and outstanding primary and secondary schools in the parish;
- excellent administration support;
- a supportive and active PCC;
- enthusiasm and optimism for the future.



THE BENEFICE :- WHERE & WHAT WE ARE

- The Benefice is 2 distinct Parishes :

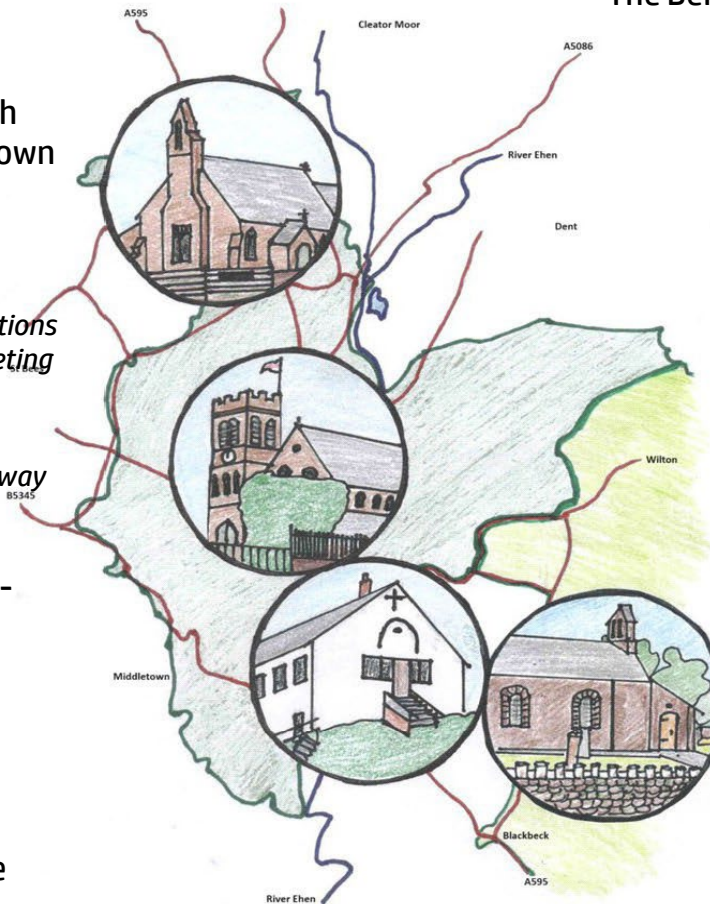
- * Egremont, Bigrigg with Moor Row and Thornhill

- * Haile

comprising our 4 Church buildings, all of which are located on or near the A595 south of the town of Whitehaven which provides a range of amenities including a harbour, marina and Railway Station.

Trains operate along the coast stopping at various locations close to our parishes (including Whitehaven) and meeting main-line routes at either Carlisle or Barrow.

We are about 45 miles south of Carlisle and north of Barrow and an hour and half away from the M6 motorway by car.



- A Team Ministry operates across the benefice -

- * Part time Rector

- * Full-time team Vicar (this vacancy)

- * SSM Curate (from June)

- * small lay team that leads Services with unwavering support from a bank of retired priests (including the Rural Dean and his assistant) and direct engagement from the Archdeacon.

- We hold regular worship across the Benefice traditionally based around the Eucharist but latterly supplemented by simple worship.

We accept and support the Ministry of women, an aspect of ministry that we have promoted from its inception and very recently re-endorsed.

- Congregations are embedded in the local communities.
- The Benefice generally makes its Parish offer and the churches hold financial reserves.

- All Churches have elected Wardens in place and lay participation in services.

- 2 separate PCCs still operate but increasingly joint meetings are held to agree joint events/services, share experience, define common practices and policies and explore new opportunities.

- Administration is organised on a Benefice basis with common rotas and policies. All communications are cross-Benefice. There is a dedicated meeting place/office that is well equipped and there is the support of a volunteer Benefice Administrator.

- The Benefice is becoming increasingly involved in our ecumenical Mission Community Unit – Coast to Fells.

- We have been active participants in the Churches Together in Egremont and District group for many years- also ecumenical.



THE BENEFICE : - WHERE & WHAT WE ARE

ST JOHN'S CHURCH BIGRIGG :

ST JOHN'S is our northernmost Church and is situated on the busy A595.

A Victorian church with an adjacent car park & modern-day facilities (and a refurbished bell) that faces our lowly fells.

We serve the villages of Bigrigg, Moor Row & the Woodend hamlet - all of which are within walking distance; and we welcome all from wherever.

In the last few years, to complement and enhance our usual ministry and explore our outreach, we have introduced:

- lay-led services by 2 of our dedicated members
- a monthly Bring & Share lunch after the Sunday service.
- an Easter Workshop (decorating Easter Bonnets to wear on Easter Sunday)
- a Christmas Trees Festival involving the local community (*Hand bell ringers entertain at this festival..... we have a local Brass Band that accompanies our Harvest & Christingle Services*)
- Coffee mornings in the local village hall (3 or 4 times a year.)

We have regularised our Home Communion visits and are pleased to continue to welcome flower displays, refreshments & small handmade gifts – all a true asset in our lovely church.

We take great delight from :

- our local school and the Rainbow's group providing decorations for our Church at Holy Festivals
- the number of requests for Baptisms and Weddings that we accommodate

Everything is advertised on our individual Facebook page.

St. John's is a caring church

& we are committed to work to strengthen our outreach in the community





THE BENEFICE : - WHERE & WHAT WE ARE THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST MARY & ST MICHAEL EGREMONT



St Mary & St Michael's at Egremont is our largest Church.

Egremont is pretty central in our Benefice geography and the Church is situated at the south-end of the town - at the bottom of the Main Street where we have shops that supply all the essentials of day -to-day living.

Consecrated in 1883 the Church holds the place of many previous places of worship and has many wonderful features. We are a small but dedicated and welcoming congregation and continue to be encouraged by the support from the town and local community in all our endeavours.

We seem to enjoy noise !!
We love to sing, we like to clatter our cups after services and we love to have a good craik and a laugh !

We take great delight in all the little ones who come for Baptism and oohh...the Weddings !

But we can be quiet and reflective too.....and pray carefully.
It is a privilege to help our families in their goodbyes to our friends in Christ.
Our small (but effective) robed choir lifts our worship each Sunday and at other major events; notably Christmas when we regularly welcome 200+ to our Christingle Service & Remembrance Sunday when the Church hosts the Civic Service. There are more. The group supports the other Churches in the Benefice and rotates with the cycle of Benefice Services.
We feel privileged that we seem to remain relevant to the community and be the focus for civic events most latterly the Commemoration of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth 11 and the Coronation of His Majesty King Charles 111.
Our Church is well complemented by the adjacent Parish Hall that is totally self financing and used by many community groups. Our Tuesday morning congregation started to meet in the Hall during the cold months of the Covid restrictions and remains there today – Tuesdays in the Hall – Communion & Coffee.





THE BENEFICE : - WHERE & WHAT WE ARE

HAILE PARISH CHURCH

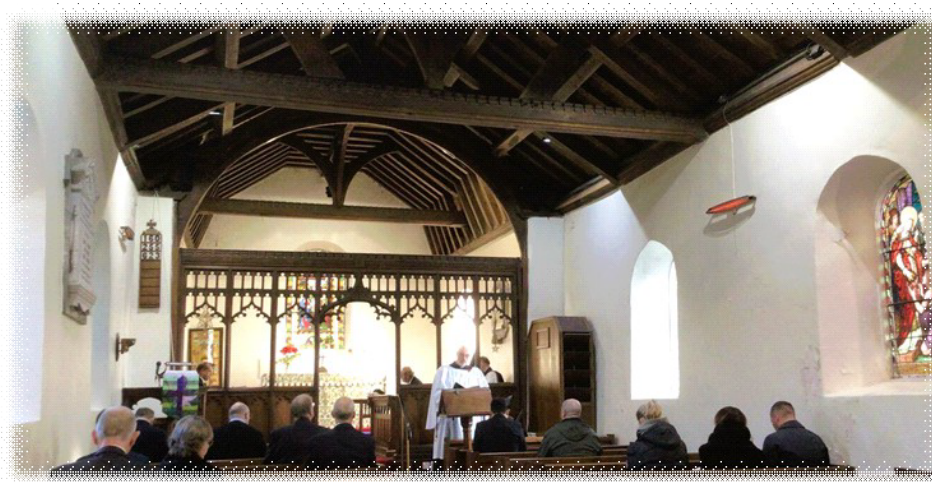
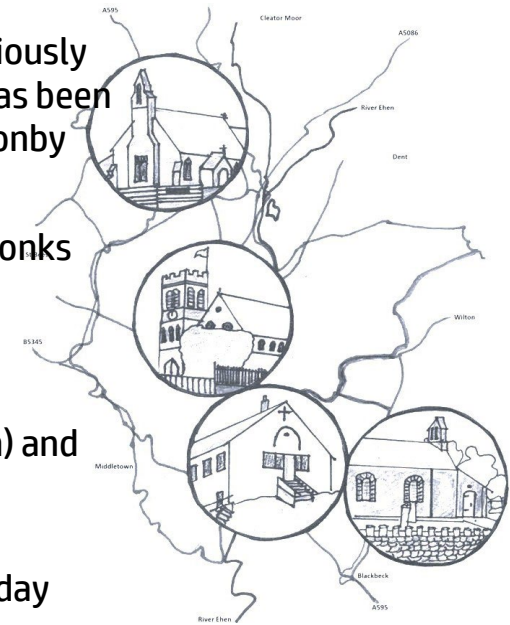
Our oldest and most easterly Church at the heart of the rural farming community and obviously linked to the local 'Estate', Haile Hall that is situated about a mile north of the village and has been a dwelling since the 13th century by the de Hale and then passed by marriage to the Ponsonby family, Haile Church is pure and simple in it's forming but bathed in all God's beauties.

The Church was initiated by Celtic Christians holding open air worship, a rough shelter for monks travelling between Calder Abbey and St Bees Priory ; a place of Christian gatherings. The present building was restored and modernised in the 1880s looking very much as it does today with a single aisle, chancel screen and choir stalls.

We follow the Benefice pattern of Worship (alternate Morning Worship and Holy Communion) and also hold Traditional Evensongs one Sunday a month through May to October.

A Candlemas Evensong is a regular feature in our schedule.

Other special services include our annual Easter egg hunt in the Churchyard on Easter Sunday morning, Candlelit Christingle the Sunday before Christmas and Midnight Communion on Christmas Eve.

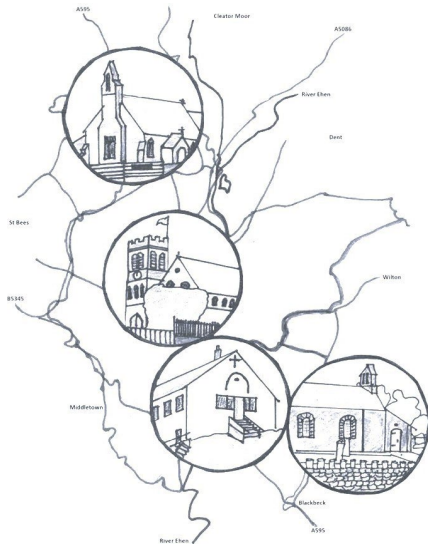


Our money raising event is our Strawberry Tea each June .

Haile Churchyard remains open, administered within the Parish and lovingly cared for.



THE BENEFICE : - WHERE & WHAT WE ARE THORNHILL MISSION



And then – closest to the sea (or so it seems as the sea can be seen from it's lowly Altar that must prove a distraction for our celebrants on a splendid spring morning) our gentle Thornhill Mission.

A history as rich as all our Churches but rather more secular and community based; the Mission was built by the people and for the people some 90+ years ago. A building designed to offer a place for worship by all ecumenical groups; it has been the venue for meetings of many uniformed societies, social events and community activities.

Adopted by the Church of England some years ago and only recently (following a pastoral re-organsiation), formally adjoined to the Benefice; the Mission has a small and faithful congregation that has been underpinned for many years by the efforts of a few who travelled with the Mission from its origin - some no longer with us.

The spirit lives on. Our future is somewhat uncertain and our building in need of some care but we take joy from some glimmers of hope for the future and from the joint services which have been held at the Mission - and it is nothing for us to be giving a little jig – the Mission folk like a soft and lively song.





OUR WORSHIP



Our Benefice has responded to significant change in resource and circumstance over the last couple of years and adopted a pattern of Sunday Morning worship that alternates a Eucharist or Morning Worship Service in each Church. A Benefice Service rotates the Churches on the 5th Sunday of the month.

Overall we are middle -road Anglican; we honour our past but look to the future with a recognition of the need for change in moving forward.

We feel we are adaptable to new forms of worship.

Mid-week services are held each week at Egremont:

Tuesdays in the Hall

A long-standing and main-stay service over the years that has settled now into a gentle, comforting service in its 'different' location in the Parish Hall.

Wednesday evening Meditative Communion

A simple and quite said Eucharist .

We follow the liturgical calendar, observe where we can and the vestments that are available are generally worn *It has already been said that there is a robed choir at Egremont that supports the whole Benefice.*

We are without an Organist/ Director of Music and each of our Churches presently relies on recorded music that does provide us with the flexibility of introducing a variety of new styles of music.

St John's Bigrigg and Egremont Parish Church each has quite elaborate Organ configurations that presently are only used at funerals by visiting organists.

The smaller organ at Haile is used slightly more regularly.

The local Town Band regularly supports our worship.





THE BENEFICE : - BAPTISMS, WEDDINGS & FUNERALS

We encourage parents to bring children for Baptism and take great delight in welcoming a great many families with their friends.

We are working to introduce events to nurture ongoing contact.

Adults who have not been baptised previously but wish to make the commitment are also always welcome.

Baptism is available at all of our Churches – either during Morning Service or stand alone early afternoon.



Each of our churches provides a beautiful location for a wedding and we are always pleased when couples wish to be married with us and ever willing to discuss eligibility.

As the big day approaches we hold gentle preparation days.

We do solemnize marriages for divorcees.

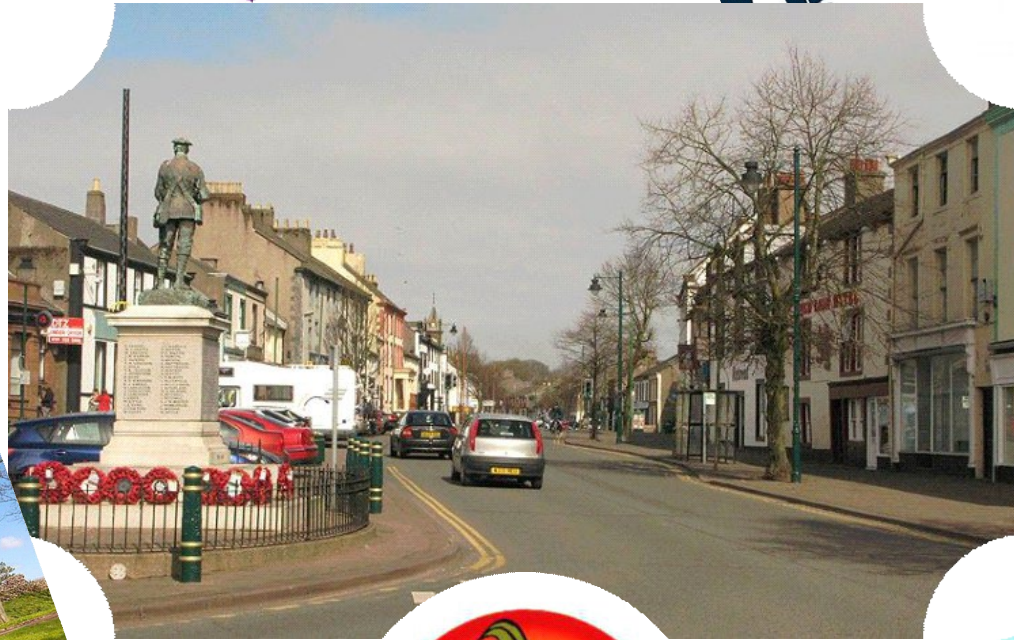
The Benefice typically handles 50-60 funerals in a year. A significant proportion comprise a service held solely at the local Crematorium (about 6 miles from Egremont).

Haile Churchyard remains open for burial but the majority of interments take place at the civic cemetery at Egremont.

Our cross-Benefice All Soul's Service is a source of comfort to the recently bereaved – *and not so recently.*



OUR COMMUNITY





OUR COMMUNITY

& LOCAL AREA

Egremont is the principal town of our Benefice and is where our Team Vicar will be housed.

A small market town that was granted a market charter in the 13th century with its famous annual Crab Fair and World Gurning championship that began in 1267 and attracts many tourists to the town each September.

The town centre is seeing a small resurgence after experiencing problems common to high streets across the country. There has been some minor new housing developments in the last couple of years and two further and more extensive in scale have been given approval to proceed.

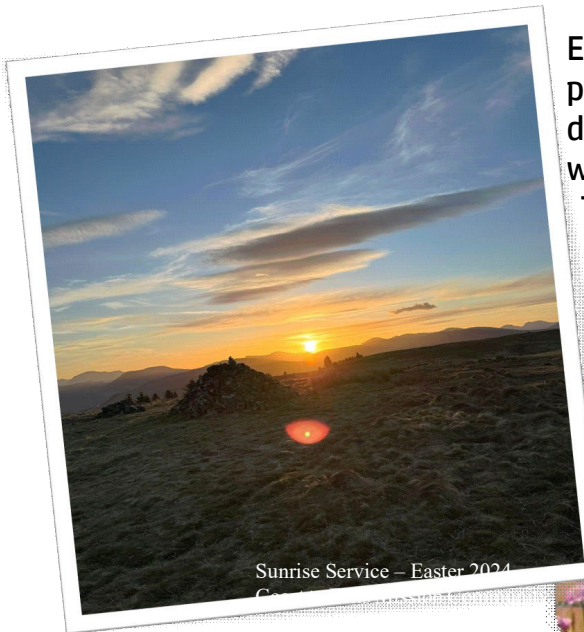


The ruins of a Norman sandstone castle stand magnificent at the southern end of the town. Opposite is the parish Church. Lord & Lady Egremont actively support the maintenance of the Castle and are also patrons of the Church.

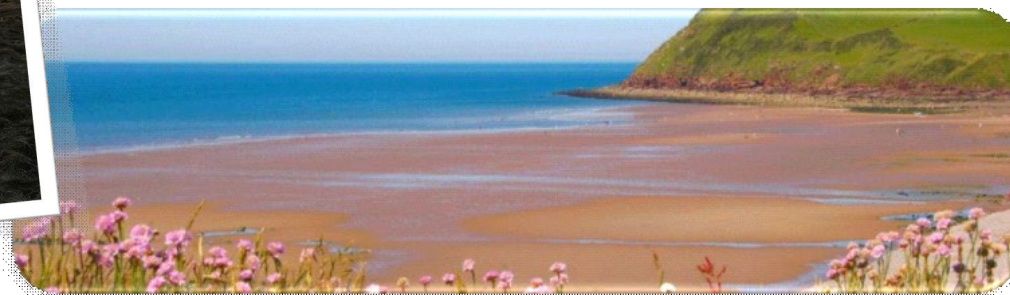


Egremont is situated on the coastal plain with the fells rising on our doorstep and the sea close to the west.

There are good walks directly from the town – along the River Ehen, through the Uldale Valle and even to the summit of Dent Fell (1000ft).



Sunrise Service – Easter 2024



The seaside village of St Bees with its large sandy beach is only 3 miles away and the beautifully soft Ennerdale lake a mere 6 miles.



OUR COMMUNITY & LOCAL AREA

Our villages are for the most part serviced by the amenities available in Egremont :

- Doctor's Surgeries (2)
- Dental Practice
- Veterinary Practices
- Independent Butchers & Greengrocer
- Post Office
- Building Society (sadly no bank- but cash points)
- Supermarkets (2 with planning permission for a further major well known store)
- Petrol Stations & Motor Mechanics
- Hairdressers
- A plethora of cafe and food outlets.

The earliest documented evidence of mining within Egremont parish related to Bigrigg Mine in 1179

Employment is heavily focused on the nearby Nuclear Decommissioning site.
(Mining which was once the principal industry in the region stopped many years ago).

There are small pockets of deprivation and areas of need.

A charity providing shelter for the homeless operates in Egremont has become a friend of the Church.



The villages of Bigrigg & Moor Row still reflect their mining heritage in the layout at the heart of their communities but each is becoming increasingly popular for new housing development and each also has some commercial enterprise.

Thornhill that was built as a new town over 90 years ago boasts a post office and village store.

Haile, with Wilton & Blackbeck are our rural farming villages although many buildings/properties have now been converted into family homes and the area has seen a degree of independent new-build housing.





SCHOOLS

There are 5 Primary Schools (one is dedicated Roman Catholic) within the Benefice - one in the Bigrigg and Moor Row area, another in Thornhill and the rest in Egremont. Bookwell School shares a boundary with the Rectory garden.

A secondary Academy that is independently governed but state funded, provides education to students from our area and further south of the Benefice. It is situated on the main street of Egremont and is within walking distance of the Rectory.

Both Bookwell School and the West Lakes Academy have been Ofsted rated as excellent – the others are all rated Good schools.

A private bus service operates to Keswick where there is a secondary school of choice from some of our young people.

There is a private school in St Bees Village.

We are delighted to have links with each of the local schools and take pleasure in welcoming the children to Church and also working with them in their own environment.

The Christmas services that we host for our primary schools feature heavily in the community calendar!





OUR VISION

A refreshed vision



God for All

4 clear thematic areas, which form the vision for 'God for All' going forwards.



Follow Daily

Matthew 16.24:

If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.

We will help each other to follow Jesus more closely, seeking to grow as his disciples in all aspects of life, both corporately and as individuals



Care Deeply

Jeremiah 29.7

But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.

We will listen to our local communities, and respond in loving service, seeking to transform injustice, challenge oppression and pursue peace & reconciliation



Speak Boldly

Acts 4.31

And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.

We will share our faith in Jesus Christ in everyday ways, seeking to connect with everyone, especially those currently unrepresented in our churches. We'll do this in both time-honoured & pioneering ways.



Tread Gently

Isaiah 11:9

They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.

We will strive to safeguard the integrity of God's creation, seeking to sustain and renew the life of the earth



THE ENDalmost

It is our hope that many readers will reach this page....
and therefore may still be considering whether it is their call to come to work with us?

Thank you for coming this far!

Our prayer is for that interest!



The profile is offered by our PCCs, having been compiled by a small sub-group which is not expert in these areas, has tested skills old and (very) new and the group accepts that not everything is 'right'; and is also concerned for everything that has been overlooked – apologies for such are offered from here. *We've not added facts and figure but copies of our returns can be made available.*

The words are our own and the pictures from our midst, all with agreement for inclusion from those featured and/or the artist.

OUR SUMMARY :

We are a Benefice that is looking to rediscover the light of Christ in today's society and within our community;
and in true need of a Team Vicar who will help :

- | | | |
|--|---|-------------------------|
| Care for our people/community | - | CARE DEEPLY |
| Grow the Church, introduce new forms of worship | - | SPEAK BOLDLY leading to |
| Discover greater spirituality | - | FOLLOW DAILY |
| Partner with others to care for our locality and wider world | - | TREAD GENTLY |

.....maybe you ?!



....LOVE TO MEET YOU !





APPENDIX 1 – THE VICARAGE (RECTORY)

Our Rector who has responsibility for both the Egremont & Haile and neighbouring St Bees Parish, is resident in the St Bees village so what has been traditionally known as the Egremont Rectory will be the home of our Team Rector.

Purpose built – albeit in the 1950s - it has been maintained to modern standards and is located about 10 minutes (by foot) from Church in a quiet residential area. It is adjacent to one of our Primary Schools. has a large and enclosed garden space and takes in some lovely views.....

