



arden marches

Bringing God's love to a hurting world.

Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Studley
Church of the Holy Ascension, Mappleborough Green
Holy Trinity Church, Morton Bagot
St Mary's Church, Oldberrow

**Welcome to our Profile. We are
praying that the right person is
being led by God along the
pathway to our doors.**





Bishop's Introduction

As the new Bishop of Coventry, I am delighted that you are considering the possibility that God may be calling you to The Arden Marches Benefice. It is a challenging time to be a church leader in the Church of England and here in Coventry we are committed to helping clergy to flourish and grow in their vocation, to know themselves loved and called by God and to find that they are valued by the bishop, the senior team and their colleagues both lay and ordained.

We seek clergy who find their joy in the good news of Jesus Christ and are passionate to share that joy with others. The Arden Marches Benefice is a lively community with a rich history and a real heart to reach the people of their community with God's love. Like many churches they want to find new ways to support the growth of the church among all ages and have a particular sense that nurturing children, young people and families will be key in this. Of course, we are deeply grateful for the faithful ministry of older people in our communities too and there is a very committed team at The Arden Marches Benefice who will want to welcome and work with you going forward.

Coventry also has a special calling to be a place and people of reconciliation. Our world is far from peaceful, and God calls us to be peacemakers, so if this is something you feel drawn towards then Coventry Diocese may well be the place for you. Everyone has a part to play in this, and we are excited about the shape of this in the years ahead.

Please be assured of my prayers as you discern your future,



Rt Rev Sophie Jelley
Bishop of Coventry

Welcome to the Alcester Deanery!

The Arden Marches benefice occupies the Northwestern corner of the Alcester Deanery - a very beautiful part of rural Warwickshire and a deanery with over 30 churches. Alcester, Studley, Bidford-on-Avon, and Henley-in-Arden are the largest population centres. We currently have a planned deployment of 6 full-time incumbents, and 3 House for Duty priests, supported by many helpful and valued retired clergy.

Alcester Minster benefice is a Coventry Diocesan Mission Hub with a rural focus and has an additional Associate Minister to support this initiative.

We can offer you a very warm, supportive Deanery Chapter where we enjoy good relationships, meet regularly for prayer, fellowship, and mutual support, and share a common heart for the growth and flourishing of the mission of our churches across our Deanery and beyond. All our recent appointments have been clergy who enjoy working collegially.

We have been exploring new ways of sharing ministry across ecclesiastical boundaries to develop a truly Deanery-wide mission approach, incorporating the existing clergy and those yet to be appointed. We expect all our deanery incumbents to be rural pioneers, each willing to take a lead on developing a particular aspect of mission across the deanery as well as in their own benefice.

There is plenty of scope for the person appointed to offer an aspect of their ministry skill set which they particularly enjoy. We trust that this added dimension will enrich ministry in the parish as well as benefitting the wider deanery. In turn, they can look forward to receiving reciprocal support from their Chapter colleagues.

We look forward to welcoming a creative colleague who enjoys variety and will lead the Arden Marches into a new season of growth and flourishing through their shared aim of being welcoming communities journeying together to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ to their villages. This will involve prioritising ministry among children and young people and building on the heart for mission articulated in the concept of 'pathways' as described in the profile.



Rev Katie Cross
Area Dean

A Welcome from our Churchwardens

Welcome to our profile. The Arden Marches Benefice is made up of 2 Parishes, supporting 4 churches, each with its own unique characteristics, but all working together towards our shared vision of growing our churches by developing pathways to enable people to encounter Jesus.

Our previous incumbent has left us in a strong position to continue growing and developing our church life, with many enthusiastic church members involved in a wide variety of activities, including leading worship & prayer, Life Groups, social & hospitality events, care for the church buildings and churchyard. We also have a strong presence in the community through or Dementia Café, Warm Hub, Foodbank and other local groups. I would like to extend a warm welcome to a new incumbent who will join our church family and lead us on to greater things in the work of building God's kingdom in our part of Warwickshire.

Phil Pattison, Churchwarden Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Studley

Looking ahead, we know it won't be easy whilst a new incumbent is sought, but we stay positive and open minded for our future as part of Arden Marches Churches. The congregation maintains a strong focus on faith and hope. Whilst most of our current congregation at Mappleborough Green Church of the Holy Ascension are more senior in age, our commitment to our shared Vision with our Lay Reader and Worship Leadership team remains very focused, driven and positive for our future.

Mrs Linda Salsbury, Churchwarden Church of the Holy Ascension Mappleborough Green

As the 'junior partners' in the Arden Marches Benefice, we feel that we can offer a different kind of spirituality within the church family – one that reminds us of our oneness with God and with the natural environment. We would welcome a new incumbent who will appreciate the special contribution that the small rural churches can offer and will work with us to ensure a future for our very special places of worship.

Mrs Jane O'Dell, Churchwarden St Mary's Church, Oldberrow



OUR VISION

Our vision is to develop innovative pathways and ideas that will lead people into a relationship with Jesus:

- Pathways to deeper spiritual growth within our churches, rooted and grounded in the love of God
- Pathways into the church: nurturing the influence of the Holy Spirit in deepening relationships within the church, cultivating a family-feel, welcoming community, offering relaxed, bespoke hospitality, encouraging participation in church activities.
- Pathways out of the church: taking God's message into the community and sharing His love, being visible and active in our local community.
- Pathways for seekers to become disciples: recognising and nurturing the gifts of every individual, encouraging lay leadership across all ages, building on the strengths of our existing lay teams.

HOLY SPIRIT



OUR PRIORITIES

Over the past 7 years we have been exploring new pathways to grow and deepen our church life. Following the LYCiG model, we have focused our activities around the 4Ps: Prayer, Presence, Proclamation and exPLoring, including:

- running a 24-hour Prayer room and an Ascension day of prayer
- hosting an Ignation Spiritual Retreat day
- organising community events in the churches and churchyards
- running Alpha and Start courses
- growing and developing lay-led Life Groups
- organising LYCiG workshops to explore new ideas
- developing lay teams for leading worship
- our Family Link Worker has facilitated closer links with our church schools, re-energised our Sunbeams (parents & toddlers) group and developed more family-friendly worship & activities within our churches
- our Messy Church team leads an increasingly popular monthly service
- our Anna Chaplain team has strengthened our pastoral work with elderly parishioners, leading regular services in 2 of the Care Homes and starting up a Dementia Café, which is well supported and now runs twice a month
- Churches Together – Lent Courses, Ladies and Men's Breakfasts

Our key priorities for the next 5 years are

- **Growth** – growing our congregations, making new disciples, growing in wisdom, faith, prayer, witness and spiritual gifts, building a more sustainable future.
- **Community engagement** – pastoral care, especially for the elderly and lonely, provision for families and teenagers, engaging with the 'missing' generations, making greater use of our churches for community involvement, building on our school links.
- **Effective leadership** – team building, encouraging spiritual gifts, developing more appropriate functional structures.



OVERVIEW OF THE BENEFICE

The Arden Marches group is a friendly and welcoming community of 4 churches, open to trying new approaches and embracing change, with a strong commitment to seeking God's will. Our efforts have been focused on becoming fully 'open' for God, the church, and the community. We strive to offer hospitality to all and encourage people to adopt new pathways and ideas with love and humour. We would hope that our next Rector will demonstrate these qualities.

The churches are set in a beautiful part of Warwickshire, including the large, vibrant village of Studley and its surrounding villages. It has good transport connections - we are a few miles from the M40, M42 and M5, with Birmingham Airport and International Railway Station about 40 mins away.

Studley developed through its needle industry and light manufacturing, giving it the appearance of a bustling town while preserving its charming village ethos. This has resulted in a mixed residential community, unlike many other Warwickshire villages.

The nearby, smaller villages thrive on the strong support from their close-knit communities and consistently receive favourable comments from visitors drawn to their peaceful and spiritual ambiance. The tranquillity here offers a quiet 'space', away from the hustle and bustle of everyday life, to spend time with God.

The Arden Marches group of 2 parishes and 4 churches continues to work well together under the guidance of the two PCCs (Studley with Mappleborough Green, and Morton Bagot with Spernal* and Oldberrow). We are currently exploring the possibility of amalgamating into one PCC to simplify our governance structure. Like most rural and semi-rural parishes, we face the twin challenges of maintaining our beautiful buildings and an aging congregation. We are encouraged, however, by some recent signs of growth in our churches. The Funding our Future Programme, which we ran in June, has resulted in a significant strengthening of our day-to-day financial resources.

With the retirement of our dedicated Rector, who has passionately guided our churches towards growth and embraced an 'open-door' philosophy, we now seek a new leader to carry forward this legacy.

**Spernal church has been closed since 1972 and is now maintained by the Ancient Monuments Society. It is a Grade II listed building, dating back to the 12th century. The churchyard remains open for burials.*

ROLE SPECIFICATION

We are looking for someone who

- will support varying worship styles and encourage new expressions of 'being church'
- will work well with lay teams within the Benefice and contribute to the wider Deanery mission
- will support and build on the good connections with our 2 church schools, taking on the role of Ex-officio Foundation Governor in each school
- will guide and strengthen our PCCs as we work towards a new governance structure

PERSON SPECIFICATION

We embrace the opportunity to welcome a new priest, who may or may not already have incumbency experience, to continue to develop a 'pathways' approach in our benefice.

Our new incumbent will

- be passionate about encouraging and supporting individuals to pursue a pathway to discipleship, committing their hearts and lives to Jesus
- lead us in creating worship that is inspiring for all
- appreciate the diverse ages, backgrounds and faith journeys of our congregation
- be sensitive to different views on issues of concern to the wider church
- be able to communicate with warmth and approachability
- foster positivity and meaningful relationships within our community
- and importantly, have a sense of fun!

THE PARISHES OF THE ARDEN MARCHES GROUP - IN BRIEF

Studley

- Population c6,000
- Large village with commuters
- Electoral roll: 101
- Very ancient, well-maintained church on outskirts of the village with a separate church hall in the centre of the village
- Weekly range of worship styles, mostly informal; monthly Common Worship Holy Communion
- Find us at B80 7AB or error.look.obey



Mappleborough Green

- Population c800
- Rural linear village with commuters
- Electoral roll: 52
- Weekly range of worship styles, from informal café church to formal Holy Communion
- Victorian Chapel of Ease on the main Birmingham Road with a small church hall nearby
- Find us at B80 7DJ or equal.skills.rice



Oldberrow

- Population c100
- Hamlet and scattered housing
- Electoral roll: 7
- Small church, rebuilt in 1875 and well maintained
- Monthly BCP Evensong or Holy Communion
- Has always been left open for visitors
- Churchyard designated a Local Wildlife Site
- Find us at B95 5NU or transmit.unlucky.outermost



Morton Bagot

- Population c100
- Farms and scattered housing
- Electoral roll: 7
- Small 13th Century Church, with no mains electricity or water services, set next to Church Farm.
- Monthly BCP Evensong or Holy Communion
- Find us at B80 7RJ or gloom.mend.trouble



Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Studley

Our location: The church is nestled in the countryside by the river Arrow approx $\frac{3}{4}$ mile East of Studley centre.

There are 4 schools in the village; Studley High School, which achieved an 'Excellent' rating in their recent OFSTED inspection, Studley St Mary's Academy (C of E Junior School) which has strong links with the church and Studley Infants' School. There is also a Catholic Primary school.

Our church: St Mary's Church (as it is called locally) was part of a Saxon village that formed around the old castle by the River Arrow. The Norman Parish Church was founded around 1105 and is a Grade 2 listed building. From the Middle Ages the village of Studley gradually migrated to its present location around Icknield Way, now the A435 about $\frac{3}{4}$ mile away.

The church is traditionally aligned east–west and is well maintained. During the 1935 renovations, the west door in the tower was closed to create a vestry at the base of the tower. At the end of the 20th century, the organ console was moved to its current location in the chancel and the 'Millenium Room' was created in what had been the organ loft. This room is regularly used for Junior Church and other meetings. The new belfry which was created above the Millenium Room now holds eight bells and we have a very active and enthusiastic team of bellringers. In 2012 a new porch entrance at the South door was added, incorporating toilet facilities, and in 2017, a modern servery area was installed at the rear of the Nave. External repairs to the church tower are scheduled for Spring 2026, funded from a generous legacy.



Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Studley

Live music is provided for the majority of services, with a newly formed music group playing on the 2nd Sunday of each month. Festival services have a band consisting of about 20 orchestral instruments and a choir of up to a 15 people.

The seating is mainly traditional pews, with additional chairs to enable seating for up to 150. Modern audio-visual equipment is installed and supported by a small, knowledgeable AV team.

The churchyard is now restricted for new burials but is managed and maintained for wildlife by an active group of church volunteers. The garden of remembrance is open for the interment of ashes. There is a Parish Council Cemetery adjacent to the Church.



Worship is brilliant with a variety of styles

"a breath of fresh air"

Music varied to meet the needs of all

Family friendly / provision for children

The Parish Centre: Located in the centre of the village, the Parish Centre was the old village schoolhouse. This central location is ideal for much of our community outreach.

Inside there is a well-equipped kitchen with a serving hatch into the main room. There is a compact side room (Jaffray Room), which was recently refurbished as a 'Wellbeing Room' thanks to a generous grant from Warwickshire County Council. It is suitable for quiet prayer and contemplation or for small group counselling sessions. There is a keyboard, and modern a/v equipment in the main hall with chairs for up to about 80 people. It is currently used for Messy Church, Sunbeams (for mums & toddlers), Tea Cake & Friendship Group, Dementia Café, Souper Bowls, Quiz Nights and our annual Maundy Supper. It is also available for private hire and is used for children's parties, Brownies, Rainbows, Live & Local Cinema, Pilates, Martial Arts and the monthly Studley Repair Café. There is plenty of parking in the car park to the rear.

Pathways from Church to the community are also pathways from the community to the Church



Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Studley

Parish Centre activities for the community

Sunbeams

Sunbeams is our thriving toddler group, running weekly during term time. Each session includes refreshments for both adults and children, music, songs, and a story time, supported by a dedicated team of volunteers who help with setup, refreshments, and crafts.

Messy Church

Messy Church is a monthly, family-friendly gathering led by volunteers, offering themed activities, storytelling, songs, prayer, and a shared meal, with extra events at Easter and Christmas and a 'Light Party' in the churchyard as an alternative Halloween celebration. It's promoted through email and local social media. It is supported by many congregation members who help to create a welcoming space where children engage, and parents connect. The team also encourages families to explore other church services.

Dementia Café

Runs twice a month on a Thursday afternoon for those with dementia and their caregivers. The first Thursday is entertainments or activities based, the third Thursday is a Singing for Fun session.

Souper Bowls

Runs twice a month, for much of the year, on a Tuesday lunchtime providing homemade soup, company and conversation.

Tea, cake and friendship

A weekly opportunity to share tea, cake and friendship on a Monday afternoon. It is primarily aimed at those who feel lonely or isolated, including the bereaved, elderly and young parents.

Church based activities

Church Services

Our monthly pattern of services offers a range of informal worship styles, from Holy Communion to our all-age Worship 4 Everyone. Dedicated Worship teams plan and lead the services each week, with participation from congregation members for welcoming, readings, prayers, operation of the sound and a/v systems and refreshments.

Parish Prayer is held twice monthly at the Parish Centre and at Ankorn House, Mappleborough Green.

Music

The music ministry at Studley Parish Church plays a vital role in enriching worship. Festival services feature choirs and bands made up of church members and guests, offering a welcoming space for musicians of all levels to participate and grow. The commitment of those involved in Studley Parish Church's music ministry brings depth to our worship, strengthens our sense of community, and encourages meaningful praise and reflection.

Bellringing

Bellringing at Studley Church is a well-supported activity involving regular practices, Sunday ringing, and participation in regional and national events. The team includes both experienced ringers and enthusiastic beginners, with outings to towers across the country and involvement in competitions. Special occasions like anniversaries and national commemorations are marked with dedicated ringing. They hold open days to encourage newcomers to take up the activity.

Churchyard

A churchyard team of volunteers meet once a month to carry out regular maintenance in the grounds. A Snowdrop Tea and other community events are held in the churchyard, and we recently hosted an outdoor performance of A Midsummer Night's Dream, performed by a local drama group and followed up with a week-long drama school.

STUDLEY, ST MARY'S CE ACADEMY

The church has strong links with Studley St Mary's CE Academy, which is an inclusive academy for pupils aged 7-11, built on a strong Christian ethos. The school has adopted the vision of 'Walking alongside to live life in all its fullness', based on Hebrews 12:1, "Let us run the race that is before us and never give up". The school achieved a 'Good' rating at its last OFSTED inspection.

As a member of the Coventry Diocese Multi Academy Trust, the church is represented by 4 Foundation Governors on the school's Academy Governance Committee, with the rector having an ex-officio place on the AGC. We have been struggling to find church members willing to fill the 4 Foundation Governor positions.

Our Family Link Worker has been instrumental in developing a new prayer and reflection space in school, which provides a warm, quiet and comfortable space at school where children can step back and take what they need with a little help from prayer and the Bible. Two worship teams now meet regularly, helping lead termly services and deepening spiritual understanding. Collective Worship is led by the rector or family-link worker every week. A member of the Baptist church also helps to lead Collective Worship

Each year group is welcomed to the church to participate in 'Experience Days', where creative activities help them develop their understanding of the Christian faith. Additionally, pupils have taken part in church services such as the nativity performances, and a whole-school Carol service. The Year 6 leavers' service in church at the end of the summer term welcomes parents, carers and grandparents to celebrate the achievements of the pupils, to say goodbye to them and wish them success in their progression to senior school and their life ahead. This is always a beautiful, uplifting occasion, supervised by the Family Link Worker. All of these church-school activities are supported by church members.



Experience Harvest 2025

Church of the Holy Ascension, Mappleborough Green

Our location: The church is situated approximately 2 miles north of Studley in a picturesque rural setting, just off the A435 at the edge of Mappleborough Green village, it is close to three Garden Centres, a popular Church of England Primary School, two pubs, a Chinese Restaurant and a Village Hall. As part of the Arden Marches Benefice, the congregation comprises people from the village, nearby Redditch, Studley, and the surrounding areas. A new large housing development to the west of the church offers potential opportunities for further outreach. However, we are mindful that the development is in a different parish and diocese.

This beautiful building and its peaceful surroundings offer spiritual solace and a space for reflection to both worshippers and visitors.

Our church: Set in several acres, the church and its grounds are well maintained and benefit from a small car park. It was built by the Jaffray family and consecrated by the Bishop of Worcester in 1888. It is Grade 2 listed with no major repairs identified at the 2023 Quinquennial Inspection. The church has the capacity to accommodate 150 people, offering flexible seating arrangements with chairs rather than fixed pews. We have an up-to-date Audio Visual and PA system and a regularly maintained organ and an electronic piano, all of which are utilized during worship services and life events.

Notably, the Bell Tower is equipped with Harrington tubular bells that are struck by hammers and operated via eight broomsticks! A small team of bellringers ensure the bells are rung most Sundays.

Thanks to two substantial legacies, recent projects have been completed, including the installation of toilet facilities within the church, the addition of a Servedy, and the resurfacing of a pathway between the church and Ankcorn House (the small church hall).

The churchyard is open and has available space for new burials. A prominent feature is the Millennium sculpture depicting Christ's Ascension, designed, crafted, and donated by a local parishioner. The area for burials has resin pathways weaving towards and around the sculpture. At the far side of the churchyard, there is a woodland area planted with native trees, many of which are memorial trees. Recently, a section of the grounds has been planted and maintained as a wildflower meadow by members of the congregation, which has helped us to achieve a Bronze Eco Churchyard Award.

The church's location, size, and grounds make it an ideal venue for weddings and well-suited for summer community events



Church of the Holy Ascension, Mappleborough Green

Ankorn House: A short path from the Church leads to Ankorn House which has its own car park and access from the main A435. It is a Grade II listed building and originally part of the Old School House. The well maintained hall can seat 60, with toilet facilities and a modern fully-fitted kitchen. It is predominantly used for church meetings, refreshments after services and for the occasional rental. During the winter months our 'Going Deeper' service was held in the warm and comfortable space it offers.

Church life: As a rural church, based on the edges of populated villages and towns our strength is reaching out to the local communities, and inviting them to share hospitality with the church family either within the church, church grounds or local village halls.

- We maintain strong links with our local primary school, and our Anna Chaplain team has a regular connection with the nearby Care Home.
- We meet for a monthly Coffee Morning at the local Garden Centre, hold Cream Tea afternoons in church during the summer, and run a monthly Friendship Group between March and December, inviting isolated and elderly folk out for lunch.
- Our church and grounds are ideally suited for community events such as the Classic Car Show (an annual event), concerts, picnics and BBQ's. A successful prayer event was held recently in the churchyard by our Forest Church team.
- Our service pattern is varied in style, ranging from traditional Holy Communion to a Café Service. We have a good team of service co-ordinators. Our "Going Deeper" service encourages a more interactive service, created in response to the Growing Healthy Churches Survey which identified the need for a deeper understanding of the Bible. Our Café Church service with its informal setting, has proved popular with families, newcomers and regulars alike. The breakfast pastries and coffee before the service add to the welcome vibe.



Diverse skills with good congregation participation. Most regular members get involved

Variety/mix of services during each month

Good team of co-ordinators

Church of the Holy Ascension, Mappleborough Green

Church life (contd):

- We have a committed Healing Prayer Team offering prayer after or during every service.
- We no longer have a robed choir or regular organist, but music is provided in a variety of ways with the help of musicians and singers. We pray that we can encourage more people and perhaps an organist to join our music groups in the future, to enhance our different styles of worship.
- We have a reputation as a welcoming and caring church where newcomers and regulars alike feel comfortable worshipping in our space. Thanks to the new Served, coffee (and often cake!) in church after services has been a positive change enabling more fellowship and discussions.
- Our Harvest Supper is a community event in the Village Hall hosted by our Churchwarden and team. Last year's Fish and Chip supper and entertainment in the form of a singer was very successful attracting people who would not normally attend our church.
- A popular Life Group meets once a fortnight in the leader's home and, for our seekers, we offer established courses like Alpha and are investigating Sycamore film sessions to deepen our journey of faith.
- To encourage inclusive worship, our children's area is a dedicated space, offering Bible themed engaging activities to entertain children during any part of a morning worship, offering parents reflective and spiritual freedom for themselves.
- We have successfully encouraged our four-legged friends to church on a couple of occasions, offering pet friendly worship and blessings.
- Signage for the church has been improved, and we are planning to widen the entrance to the driveway, enabling the local population driving past to see a clear and visible pathway to our place of worship.

Time to care
for others

Hospitality
Welcoming



MAPPLEBOROUGH GREEN CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

Mappleborough Green school is a small village school with 118 children aged between 4 and 11 years. Most of the children come from the neighbouring area of Redditch, although it is a Warwickshire voluntary controlled school, serving cross-border education.

The school was rated 'Good' in a recent short Ofsted Inspection. It was also rated 'Outstanding' by the SIAMS inspection undertaken in 2021. Both inspections are due again in the current academic year. Two church members serve as Foundation Governors who attend a specific meeting once a term with the Headteacher, as well as the regular Governor meetings, to discuss Church and Religious Education matters. The Incumbent once in post would be an ex Officio Governor member for the school.

Foundation Governors and Family Link Worker lead Collective Worship assembly at the school once a week, and a Church service takes place for Easter, Harvest and Christmas during school hours for all the children, parents and staff from the school. This is planned jointly by school staff and church members. The Foundation Governors plus other church members volunteer regularly within the classrooms to assist educational needs. At the beginning of the school year, in September, church members invite the new parents to an informal 'breakfast' with tea/coffee, cakes/pastries and tissues! Church members also volunteer at the school's Christmas and Summer Fairs, usually serving teas and cakes. Church services are announced on the school's weekly newsletter.

The school's Bible vision is 'LIVING AND LEARNING IN THE LOVE OF GOD' based on Jesus's visit to the Temple aged 12 'He grew in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and people' The school's link with the Church are important, as they offer a sense of community and encourage children to consider moral and factual questions, leading to greater social responsibility and well-being.



St Mary's Church, Oldberrow



The churchyard is well known in the Diocese for its biodiversity. The national charity, Butterfly Conservation, who help with the management, rate it in the top 5% of grasslands in Warwickshire for its breeding butterflies. Each year, around the time when they cut the hay, we hold an outdoor service giving thanks for the beauty of nature. In 2025 we were privileged to have the newly installed Bishop Sophie taking part in the service and in 2022 Bishop Christopher presided!

His Majesty, the King, has promoted the beauty and diversity of 'God's Acre' for many decades. In his book 'Harmony' (2010) he identified a 'crisis of perception' and shows how a dogmatic, restricted way of thinking has led us from crisis to crisis. He offers in the subtitle a pathway of exploration and engagement, 'A new way of looking at our world'.

Oldberrow was first recorded in 709 when, as part of the Worcester Diocese in those days, the Abbot of Evesham granted permission for monks to graze their swine in this part of the Forest of Arden.

There has been a place of worship here since the 13th century. When the Saxon church fell into disrepair, it was rebuilt by the then incumbent in 1875. The building retains many original features. Some call it a 'thin place' where Heaven meets earth, and it is part of Small Pilgrim Places Network.

This small building is a rural church in a farming community located on the corner of the main Henley road and a country lane. It can be seen from the road and is accessible to all. The message in the lichgate reads 'Welcome, this church is permanently open for those of all faiths and none'. On principle the door is never locked, and the visitors book tells its own story. The messages left are often heartwarming and sometimes heartbreaking.

We have a service here once a month on the second Sunday of the month usually alternating between Evensong and Holy Communion. All services are from the Book of Common Prayer and for Evensong we are accompanied by our old harmonium and a wonderful lady who plays it for us whenever she can! We have a faithful congregation of about 10 people who also attend Holy Trinity Morton Bagot on the fourth Sunday in the month. We share a PCC with Morton Bagot and these meetings are friendly occasions sitting at a dining room table and discussing church business over a glass of wine.



Holy Trinity Church, Morton Bagot

As a church, we are known for our friendly welcome to everyone who comes through our doors. We are also known for our great hospitality and often share in a glass of Prosecco together after our early evening service!

Services are monthly in Morton Bagot church, alternating fortnightly with our neighbouring Oldberrow church. All services are from the Book of Common Prayer.

We host our regular 'Forest church' sessions, which explores the natural habitats within the churchyard along with some acoustic style worship songs. We have hosted a number of concerts over the years, and last year we enjoyed a wonderful summer concert with a performance from a renowned local male voice choir. We have our annual 'Bluebell walk' where both church and non-church goers gather to walk through the local Banham Woods to admire the bluebells, followed by a service of thanksgiving for God's creation.

We have a joint home group with Oldberrow, meeting monthly for breakfast and bible study.

The church is open daily for anyone to visit, and comments in the visitors' book often reflect the peace and tranquility that our small rural church offers to all who visit.

We are a very animal friendly church, with the resident farm dog sometimes joining us for services, and we often have dogs coming along with their owners to our services and events.

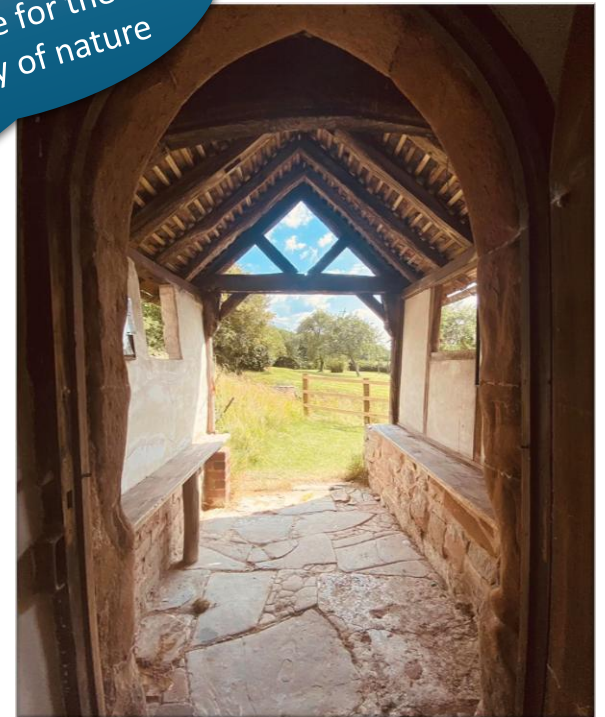
Nikolas Pevsner once described Morton Bagot church as 'that rare thing, an un-restored and un-neglected church'.

Morton Bagot is a small, rural village about 4 miles east of Studley. The quaint little church building dates from the 13th century, although details of the stone-work may suggest an earlier origin. The register of Baptisms begins in 1663, with marriages in 1676, and burials in 1665.

It has no running water or electricity supply and lies within the grounds of a local Farm. Our winter services are by candlelight, which provides a very special atmosphere. We also have a harmonium which provides us with lovely music for our Evensong services.



Forest church –
praise for the
beauty of nature



The Vicarage

Located in a quiet cul-de-sac off the A435 in the centre of Studley, the Vicarage is a modern 4 bedroom detached house with integral garage.

Downstairs accommodation includes a modern kitchen (appliances not included), dining room, study, large lounge with sliding patio doors onto the garden, and a downstairs cloakroom. Upstairs are 4 bedrooms with an en-suite shower room in the main bedroom, and a family bathroom.

The manageable, pleasant rear garden backs onto the next-door neighbour's paddock and open meadow land. Looking east across the river Arrow, you can see Studley Parish Church and there's a track across the meadow that leads down to the church.



SERVICES

The table below shows a typical monthly service rota. We review this regularly to ensure that the pattern of services works for everybody.

	1 st Sunday	2 nd Sunday	3 rd Sunday	4 th Sunday	5 th Sunday
Studley	10am Holy Communion Common Worship	8am Holy Communion BCP 10am Prayer & Praise 3.30pm Messy Church (in Parish Centre)	10am Opening the Bible	10am Worship 4 Everyone	Joint Holy Communion service alternating between Studley and Mappleborough Green
Mappleborough Green	10am Going Deeper (in Ankorn House)	10am Holy Communion ASB	10am Café Church	10am Holy Communion ASB	
Oldberrow		4pm Holy Communion BCP or Evensong			
Morton Bagot				4pm Holy Communion BCP or Evensong	

Other lay-led services include: outdoor Forest Church, quarterly at Morton Bagot; Animal Blessing service, bi-annually at different churches; monthly services at 2 Care Homes in Studley; We also meet for Parish Prayer on 1st Thursdays at Parish Centre and 3rd Thursdays at Ankorn House.

Baptisms, weddings and funerals in 2024

	Studley	Mappleborough Green	Oldberrow	Morton Bagot
Baptisms	10			
Weddings	4			
Funerals	9	3		
Crematorium Funerals	4			

ADMINISTRATION AND COMMUNICATION

The Studley and Mappleborough Green PCC employs a Parish Administrator to deal with admin matters for the whole Benefice. Rachel Nicholas, our new Administrator took over in January 2025, following the retirement of the previous long-serving administrator. Rachel currently works 12 hours per week from home. As well as providing key administrative support for all the churches, she is the main contact point for weddings, baptisms and funerals and she is also the Safeguarding Administrator, supporting the PSO.

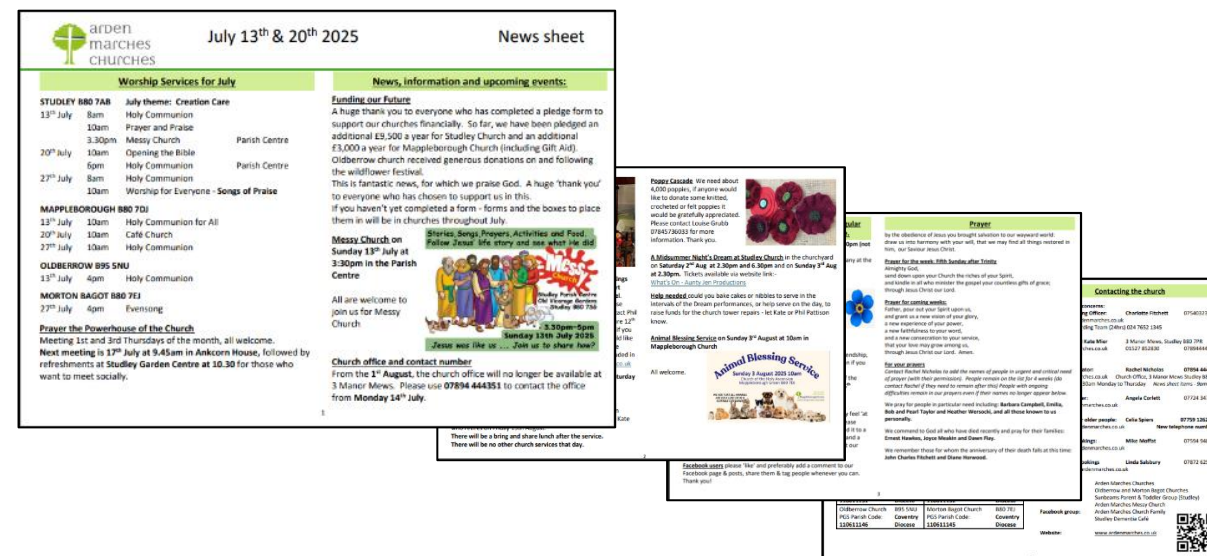
The PCC also employs a part-time Family Link Worker for 15 hours per week and contributes towards the expenses of an Anna Chaplain, who is based in a neighbouring parish.

The Arden Marches benefice has a dedicated website (www.ardenmarches.co.uk), hosted via our HUBB database system, which is managed by the Parish Administrator.

A weekly News Sheet is produced and distributed, primarily via email, to all church members and subscribing individuals.

Other communication channels include:

- Facebook pages: Arden Marches Churches
Oldberrow and Morton Bagot Churches
Sunbeams Parent & Toddler Group (Studley)
Arden Marches Messy Church
- Facebook Groups: Arden Marches Church Family
Studley Dementia Café
- WhatsApp Groups: Studley Church
Mappleborough Green Church
Life Groups
Various activity groups



FINANCE AND STEWARDSHIP

During 2024, three of the churches have had to draw on reserves to cover the shortfall between giving and expenditure. A combination of a reduction in giving, lower fee income and a reduction in fund-raising contributed to lower income, while day-to-day expenditure continued to rise, largely as a result of inflationary increases. In Studley, planned expenditure on Family Link Worker, enabling and developing music in our worship and on church fabric amounted to £8,100 and was covered by 2 recent very generous legacy donations. Similarly, in Mappleborough Green, planned expenditure on church fabric amounted to £5,229 which was funded from general reserves.

Following the 'Funding our Future' stewardship campaign in June 2025, there has been a significant increase in pledges for regular giving to the churches. We are expecting to see the result of this in our income for the second half of 2025 and into the future.

From 2024 accounts	Studley	Mappleborough Green	Oldberrow	Morton Bagot	Group Total
	£	£	£	£	£
General income	32,811	11,326	1,077	974	47,188
Planned giving	34,466	17,339	2,173	1,914	54,892
Gift Aid	7,216	4,796	968	1,112	14,092
Fundraising		822	374	405	1,601
Grants	10				10
Total Income	74,503	34,283	4,592	4,405	117,783
General expenditure	41,336	23,880	3,657	1,786	70,659
Parish Share	44,380	22,190	1,890	2,341	70,801
Total Expenditure	85,716	46,070	5,547	4,127	141,460
Surplus/(Deficit)	(11,213)	(11,787)	(955)	278	(23,677)
Unrestricted reserves	133,649	46,020	9,944	11,402	201,015
Restricted reserves	92,932	94,624		2,437	189,993

NOTES: The above figures exclude the book value of the Parish Centre and Ankcorn House.

FURTHER DETAILS AND CONTACTS

For informal conversations:

Area Dean - Reverend Katie Cross

Email: rector@alcesterminster.org

Tel: 01789 764261

For further details and an application form please contact:

HR Officer and Archdeacons' Administrator - Debbie Niblett,

Email: Debbie.Niblett@Coventry.Anglican.org

An application form can be downloaded from the Diocesan website:

<https://coventry.anglican.org/who-are-we/vacancies/currentvacancies/clergy-vacancies.php>

Enhanced DBS disclosure is required for this post

<https://www.ardenmarches.co.uk/>