

Profile for The Heart of England Parishes



**Bidford on Avon
Binton
Exhall with Wixford
Salford Priors
Temple Grafton**

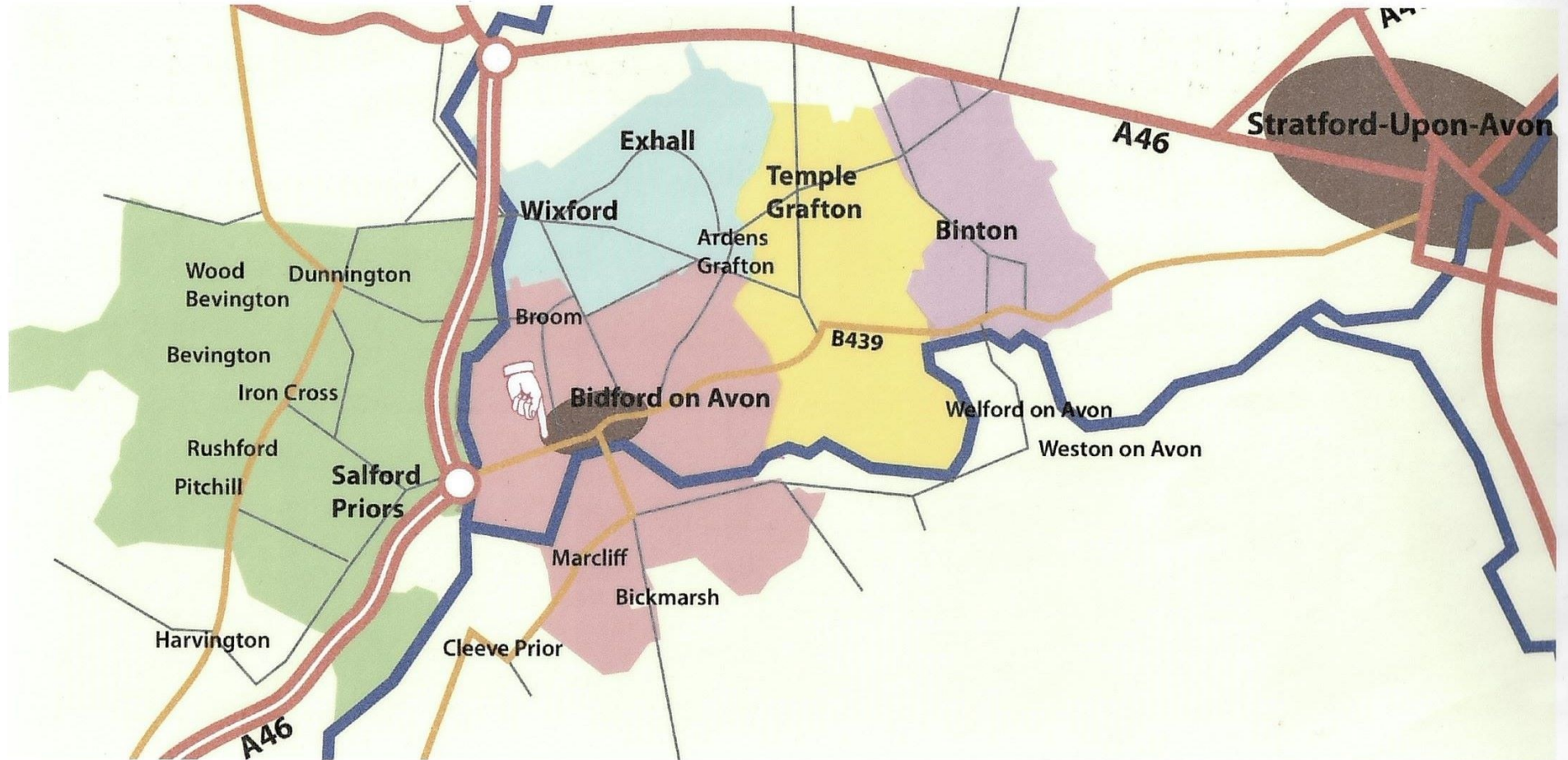
***We are praying for a new Rector to come and
join us in our desire to build up our mission in
these villages. Might this be you?
If so please read on:***





THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

Heart of England Parishes



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Area Dean's Introduction

The Heart of England benefice falls within 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 of clergy who enjoy working collegially. We are at a Kairos opportunity moment in the deanery, in that several incumbents have retired or moved on from parish ministry at the same time. So we are exploring radically new ways of sharing ministry across ecclesiastical boundaries to develop a truly Deanery-wide approach. We are looking for the next incumbent of the Heart of England benefice to be a Rural Pioneer who enjoys working collegially with clergy colleagues, and who will be both the incumbent rooted in the benefice, and also take a lead in enabling a particular aspect of mission across the wider 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. This aspect of the role is outlined in the Deanery Prospectus. We trust that this added dimension will enrich ministry in the parish as well as benefitting the wider deanery.

We look forward to welcoming a creative colleague who enjoys variety and will lead these 6 churches with 4 church schools into a new season of growth and flourishing as they serve a growing population.



Reverend Kate Mier
Area Dean of Alcester Deanery

Where are we?



We are a group of six churches in a collection of rural villages clustered in a beautiful area around the large historic village of Bidford On Avon, Warwickshire. Many of our villages are mentioned by William Shakespeare and many scholars believe that he was married at Temple Grafton church. While our parishes are generally middle class and prosperous, we do have a number of less wealthy areas. The local population is growing steadily and there are new housing estates in Salford Priors and in and around Bidford. Nearly all our congregations live within the parish boundaries.

We belong to Coventry Diocese, in the Archdeaconry of Warwick, and the Alcester Deanery.

We are ideally located with easy access to the rest of the country using the motorway network (Birmingham is about 45 minutes away, London and Manchester two hours). We have regular bus services connecting with Stratford, Evesham and Redditch. Main line trains out of Evesham serve London Paddington and Worcester and from Warwick Parkway station you can reach London Marylebone in less than two hours or go north to Birmingham and points beyond. Stratford has a rail link into Birmingham and London via Leamington.

In our parishes we have four Church of England primary schools (a total of more than 500 pupils) and we have strong links with these schools, taking assemblies, Open the Book visits and holding services in the churches for festivals and the end of academic year. We are keen to strengthen these links even further and we see our schools as a key part of our mission field. South Warwickshire is renowned for the quality of its secondary schools and we have top-performing state grammar and high schools in nearby Alcester and Stratford. There are no hospitals within the parishes, the nearest ones being at Evesham, Warwick, Redditch or Stratford, although there is a large health centre just outside Bidford.

Who we are?

As a group of 6 parishes we have different church traditions and some have a more clergy-focused approach to ministry than the others, but we work well together in forging a common vision operating across the benefice. All the Churchwardens meet together with the rector 4 times a year to be kept up to date with diocesan or deanery matters, discuss any problems and offer support to each other.

Our plan is to find a rector who will lead the benefice and help further the integration of our group. He/she will be assisted by our Associate Minister, who has special responsibility for Salford Priors as a part-time non stipendiary minister (House for Duty). St Matthew's also has a Ministry Team which works in partnership with the Associate Minister and Family Link Worker, to support their ministry in Salford Priors. Additionally we have 1 licensed Lay Reader and 5 retired clergy in our area who are very supportive and willing to help taking some services and occasional offices.

Our name reflects our vision to be representing the heart of God to our communities here in the heart of England.

What we offer to you?

- Support for the collaborative aspect of your ministry across the Deanery and a welcome to your colleagues doing the same.
- 10 hours a week of administrative support paid for by all the parishes.
- Dedicated teams in each parish willing to serve alongside you and praying for you to flourish in your ministry.



What we are like:

As individual churches, we are quite diverse in our styles of worship and we are comfortable with this variety, which we would like to retain. Some of us like the calm and familiarity of the Book of Common Prayer with traditional hymns, while others prefer more modern styles of worship, with the majority of our services drawn from Common Worship. We welcome everyone and we rejoice that our services have regular members who range in age from babies to very senior citizens. As a group benefice, the officers of each Benefice support and encourage one another in both practical and prayerful ways. We are working to extend this interconnection across our congregations. This is already evidenced by such things as one parish supporting another to set up their own Messy church, a homegroup with members from more than one church, and cross parish support for special services such as evensong, compline, Breathing Space as well as ministries such as 'Open the Book'. There has been a good spirit of connection between us as we have worked together on this profile across the Benefice and also in connection with our wider Deanery.

We have a strong lay involvement in most areas of church life, sometimes leading services, including communion by extension where authorised and also preaching and taking administrative responsibilities. As well as the Ministry Team at St Matthew's and one Lay Reader, all the churches are open to developing lay ministry and leadership.

We have four well supported Home Groups which meet regularly in homes across the benefice, studying scripture, praying and supporting one another.

There is an enthusiastic, ecumenical "Open the Book" team which visits each of the 4 church schools once a month (sometimes with live props!), and occasionally using local churches for their productions.

We offer baptism and marriage preparation, sometimes lay-led, and our members also carry out various pastoral duties, such as home visits, home group leadership, community group leading, coffee mornings etc.





We have been very involved with setting up and running a Refugee Resettlement scheme in the area called “Hearts & Homes” with one family from Syria now settled in their house in Bidford. We have welcomed several Ukrainian families staying with host members of our congregations or in other rented accommodation within the Benefice and they continue to be supported.

We recognise the need for administrative support and have recently appointed a capable person, who currently is paid for 10 hours a week and does such things as production of service rotas, weekly news sheets, website management as well as acting as the first contact point for all enquiries. We provide office equipment, including a photocopier.

We are mindful of the historic nature of the fabric of our church buildings and our need to care for them within our limited means. All of our churches pay their Parish Share and clergy’s expenses in full. As a group we are comfortable with men or women priests.

Where is Jesus leading our churches?

We are a mission-focused group, committed to knowing and loving Jesus more, growing in faith and knowledge of God and to reaching out into our communities, offering support and friendship with a variety of initiatives and events.

We see our four church schools as offering fantastic opportunities to reach young people and their families who already have a connection with church and we continue to build relationships with the schools and encourage them to come to our churches for special services and educational visits.

We are a collection of rural parishes and the size of the task means that we need to continue developing our team, so we are looking for someone who can be our team captain, but who will develop and grow together with us as we jointly serve and worship God. We recognise that our historical pattern of services may need revitalising and we are open for that. We aren't expecting our incumbent to fly around to four communion services on a Sunday morning!

Our Vision: Worshipping God. Making new disciples. Transforming Communities

Our Key priorities are:

- To be growing as church congregations both numerically and in our personal faith and in our ability to share that faith.
- To be reaching out to children, young people and families with initiatives such as Messy Church, Muddy Church, and through more engagement with our four church schools.
- For our churches to have a transforming presence in their communities, being visible and offering support where needed and encouraging our communities to participate and get involved, aiming to work alongside proactive local individuals or agencies where possible.
- To continue to nurture closer relationships between our six congregations
- We have already simplified some our governance and are open to considering further ways to do so.

Personal Qualities:

We want our churches to continue to have a welcoming ethos and we recognise the importance of the role of the incumbent in setting the tone for this welcome. Therefore we are praying for someone:

- Who will help us realise our key priorities
- Is able to help us grow in mission and confidence in sharing our faith
- Is able to teach the Bible in a way that is relevant to everyday life
- A naturally friendly person who is able to communicate easily
- Caring and approachable
- Cheerful, resilient, energetic and hopeful
- Able to identify and encourage other people's gifts and is able to work effectively with others
- Administratively competent with good delegation skills
- Alert and responsive to the pastoral needs of individuals in all areas of our parishes
- Able to work with children and young people or can inspire others to do so
- willing to offer your specialist expertise/passion in a way that is collaborative and flexible.

St Laurence's, Bidford on Avon

Bidford-on-Avon is a large semi-rural village in South Warwickshire on the river Avon and is situated half way between Stratford-upon-Avon and Evesham. The parish includes the smaller villages of Broom, Barton and Marlcliff. The population of Bidford-on-Avon at the 2021 census was 6370.

The parish is mostly residential with light industrial estates on the north-eastern boundary of the village. The B439 road from Stratford to Evesham by-passes the centre of the village. The “old” village contains the church, shops and most of the older residential properties many of which back onto the river. To the north of the B439 are more recent residential estates. The village contains most of the essential shops - Post Office within Co-op supermarket, “One Stop” mini supermarket, card shop, newsagents, pharmacy, hairdressers. There is also a dental practice, an optician, a solicitor, an estate agent, a visiting bank (Lloyds), a petrol station/garage and car sales business, a funeral director, two cafés, two restaurants, two pubs in the village, as well as others in Broom and Barton, a fish and chip shop and two take-aways. A large health centre is located on the outskirts of the village. Larger shops and supermarkets can be found in Stratford and Evesham.



St Laurence's Church is situated in Church Street, in the heart of Bidford and is a Place of Worship grade II listed building, dating from the 1200's. The nave was enlarged in the 19th century. The building seats up to 200 people, with chairs, which enables flexibility for different services. Toilets and a servery area were added in 2019. We have a large church hall which is situated on the other side of Church Street opposite the church. This used to be the school and is regularly used by church and village organisations. It consists of a hall, kitchen, and toilets. The hall is hired out for parties and other occasional events.

Our Electoral Roll consists of 55 people of whom 3 live outside the Parish. The approximate social mix of our congregation is 70% above age 70 (most of whom have retired), 19% aged 40-69, 6% aged 18-39, and 4% children (0-10).

On the first Sunday of the month, the 10.30am morning service is Café Church, which provides a relaxed atmosphere with tea/coffee and cakes, with the aim of attracting more people, especially families. On the second, third and fourth Sundays in the month, the 10.00am service is Common Worship Eucharist, which is robed. Occasionally, baptisms are included in the Sunday service. On fifth Sundays, there is usually a Group morning service, held in various churches in the Group.

We have an enthusiastic team of bellringers who ring prior to the Sunday services and for Weddings as requested. There is a weekly practice apart from one evening in the month when help is given to Salford Priors ringers.



There is a small Mothers' Union Friendship group, which meets once a month.

In September 2023 we started Messy Church on a Saturday afternoon which we hope will become established over the coming months and attract many families.

We hold a Christmas Tree Festival in the church each year with trees decorated and entered by many local businesses and organisations. It is open to the public for a small charge over one weekend in December and is very popular with the local community with a "coffee shop" alongside in the church. As well as bringing the village community together, the event provides a good source of income each year.

Waterloo House Care Home is visited occasionally by our clergy and Lay Reader, holding small services and offering Holy Communion from time to time.

Bidford is a vibrant community, that has grown significantly in the last few years, and is likely to grow even more, giving us a huge mission opportunity and challenge, that needs creative leadership.

The following page tells you about the church primary school in Bidford on Avon.



'I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full' John 10:10. By sowing the seeds of curiosity, creativity, compassion, faith, hope and courage, pupils flourish as valued members of the world community, as educated citizens and as part of God's creation: *'With God all things are possible' Matthew 19:26.*

Our school was inspected by **Ofsted** in January 2020 and we continue to be judged a **good** school. Our vision promotes pupils' well-being and inclusion and is a place where pupils flourish intellectually, emotionally and spiritually. Their journey through the school supports them in finding their own voice, purpose, potential and individuality.

We took part in a **SIAMS** inspection in May 2016. We are delighted to report that we were graded as **outstanding** in each of the three areas: meeting the needs of learners, impact of collective worship and the effectiveness of leadership and management as a Church school. We were particularly pleased that the inspector identified that 'The Christian ethos and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in the curriculum have a significant impact on the wellbeing, personal and academic development of children'.

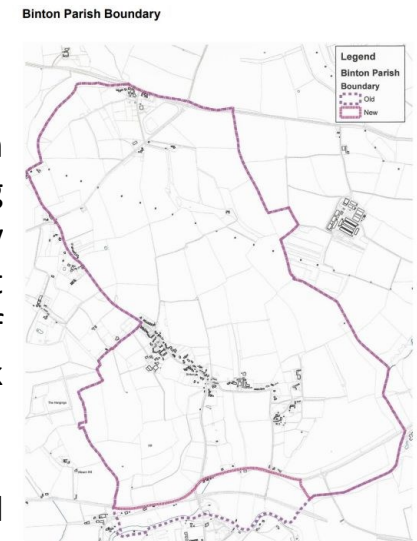
We are a school with entry places at age five for 45 children each year, and they leave us to go to a variety of local schools at age eleven. Children come from Bidford and local villages.

Our Religious Education teaching is based on the Warwickshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education and an act of collective worship takes place in school each day. We are supported by St Laurence's Church and other religious groups from the local community.



St Peter's, Binton

Binton Village (which had four entries in the Domesday book of 1086) is five miles from Stratford, with approximately 375 residents whose homes vary from thatched cottages to modern farm building conversions and from the Old Rectory, to social housing. Three quarters of the residents live in one family households, 85% of the homes are detached or semi detached; 15% of homes are rented properties. Part of the village is in a conservation area and there is very limited new building allowed. Our social mix is of families moving out of towns and commuting to work, an increasing proportion of people who work mainly from or at home, and a large proportion of retired people.



The current St Peter's Church was built in 1875 and has views south over the River Avon, Warwickshire and the Cotswolds. It was mainly paid for by the Marchioness of Hertford. There has been a church on the site since at least 1286 and some signs of the original church remain. The main feature of our church is a memorial window by Kempe, dedicated to Captain Scott and his co-explorers who died in their failed attempt to return from the South Pole. The window shows four scenes of the 1912 expedition. Scott had married Kathleen Bruce, sister of the Reverend Lloyd Harvey Bruce, Binton's rector from 1906-24.



We have several registered small businesses; one pub/restaurant (an old coaching inn); a village hall which hosts parties, meetings, exhibitions, pop-up coffee mornings, sales of various types; Binton Social Club with lots of activities including darts, shooting, birdwatching, bonfire nights, Jubilee events etc.

A tiny village green is laid out as a sensory garden with a wooden bench. There is a bus service to the good local secondary schools, a bus into Stratford on Tuesdays and Fridays, and a bookable UBUS service. We have a defibrillator, a visiting mobile library, a Book Club and a lively community WhatsApp group.

Currently there is a Family Service at 10.30 on the second Sunday each month, plus a Holy Communion Service on rotation with the other small Parish Churches. Congregations number between 10 and 20. Festival services frequently include musical contributions from our younger members and the Easter Day, Harvest, Carol and Nativity Services are well attended.

The local Parish Council is dynamic. There are many excellent walks on well maintained footpaths. The Heart of England Forest has recently acquired many acres of land and planted them with new woodland trees. Residents new to the village are provided with a welcome hamper and information on local facilities and events.

We open the church every day for local worshippers and for visitors, many of whom come to see the Scott memorial window and the accompanying exhibition about those who perished on their expedition. Unfortunately we do not have any water or kitchen facilities. A site toilet, outside, is unlocked during Services.

Our congregation includes retirees, farmers, council workers, teachers, gardeners and business people. We have a pipe organ for services and the use of a P A system when required.





Pilates session in Village Hall



Pop-up Cafe



Clothing collection for refugees

Captain Scott frequently visited the Rectory (now The Grange) and he once commented that the coldest place he ever visited was Binton Church! (We now have an efficient heating system !)

Jazz Band rehearsal



Harvest produce



St Giles, Exhall

Stones and lime mortar...

St Giles church is a grade 2 listed building. It is 900 years old and was dedicated by Simon, Bishop of Worcester in 1125. It has a 12th Century nave and a 13th Century chancel. Much of the church was restored and partly rebuilt in 1862 at a cost to the then rector (please do not let this put you off!) The interior is beautifully presented after a recent restoration. It has many interesting features including brass effigies and a Norman studded door. Although picture postcard, it's not very versatile in terms of modern worship with fixed wooden pews and no toilet or catering facilities. Having said that, we do attract a range of worshippers, including children, who have a designated area for crafts and activities. St Giles' clock face and mechanism, which is well over 100 years old has also recently been restored.



The Heart of the community....

The Parish of Exhall lies within Stratford-on-Avon District Council. It was referred to as 'Dodging' Exhall by a certain Mr Shakespeare, referring to the difficulty in trying to locate the village; the local cricket team also make reference to this fact, calling themselves the 'Dodgers', nothing to do with their age of course! There are 51 residences in Exhall with a population of 143, many of whom are retired couples but there are also several younger families with children who reside in the village too. The village is rural, and surrounded by farmed land. It enjoys a strong community spirit, and has a WhatsApp group, a vibrant village hall committee, shared suppers, monthly cinema, and lots of activities that bring people together. We also have a monthly coffee morning and library.



St Giles certainly plays a significant role in the community; it lies at the heart of the village and attracts a congregation of around 20 for our main monthly Village Praise family service. We also have Holy communion and Evensong services. We are very friendly and welcoming and it's lovely to have children and families in the church. We like to make our worship meaningful and heartfelt but relaxed and informal. We serve refreshments afterwards and have a handsome collection of biscuits, 'Jammie Dodger's' (no reference to the Bard) being a firm favourite with children.

We also have a number of special services including Harvest, Remembrance, and a Carol and Christmas day service. These services are well attended, and it is lovely to see the church full.

Of course, not everyone in the village has a Christian faith, but overall, the church is supported and cherished by the village. We have relied up on the generosity of residents on a number of occasions to raise funds for restoration projects. We have a mowing rota consisting of several gentleman in the village who give their time to mow and strim the churchyard.

The village holds its Children's Easter egg hunt in the church grounds and St Giles always plays a part in the annual fete, whether it's cream teas, singing, or treasure hunts, the church is ever present.

Accessibility is important to us and the church is always open.

In addition to our Parish Share we have raised funds for Save the Children and Acorns Childrens hospice for almost two decades. We also co-ordinate Armistice poppy fundraising in the village.

Harvest Festival



It's a wedding!



Getting ready for Carols



St Matthew's, Salford Priors

Salford Priors is a rural village set within sight of the beautiful Cotswold Hills. It is located 8 miles west of Stratford and 5 miles northeast of Evesham, in the Vale of Evesham, an important agricultural centre and soft fruit and vegetable growing area. The river Arrow joins the river Avon at Salford Priors and it is a popular location for fishermen. With a population of approximately 1,700 inhabitants, the parish of Salford Priors, which incorporates the hamlets of Abbot's Salford, Dunnington, Iron Cross, Pitchill, Rushford and the Bevingtons, is the largest parish (by area) in Warwickshire and dates back to before the 10th century. Local industry is mainly agricultural, although we also have a machinery manufacturer and a sand & gravel company. The village also caters for tourists with some B&Bs, a few pubs, a hotel and some caravan parks. Despite appearing to be an affluent area, we were identified by the diocese in 2004 as being the most deprived parish in the deanery.



The village has a modern, well used Memorial Hall at the opposite end of the village from the church where several clubs and societies meet regularly. The population is made up of retired



people as well as professionals with families, but we also have people in the middle to lower income groups with a number of single parent families reliant on benefits and the Community Pantry, which the church recently helped to set up in the school grounds. St Matthew's Church was built by the Normans and is mentioned in the Domesday book. Their influence can be seen above the main door with a typical (and magnificently) carved stone arch with different patterns. It is protected by a Victorian porch with wrought iron gate which was put there to keep out the sheep! The church has an unusual semi octagonal tower which may have been a beacon tower to guide travellers across the (often) flooded meadows. Every Good Friday we climb the tower (Health and Safety notwithstanding) to look across the surrounding countryside.



The church can seat about 170 people in total with its traditional pews in the nave and chairs in the south aisle. The south aisle is very adaptable and can be used for social events with tables and chairs set out for occasional lunches or workshops and 'Coffee Connect' once a month. We have a Church Room at the back of the church with a kitchen and servery area. Two new toilets were installed in the church last year freeing up the old outside toilet block for much needed storage.

All the liturgy, readings and songs are usually projected onto 2 large screens, one on each side of the church. The Ministry Team assist the Associate Minister to plan and deliver most of the services and they meet together to pray and discuss business regularly. Most of our services have lay people reading lessons, leading prayers and assisting at communion. We have a lively ministry of bell ringing for worship and weddings with regular practice sessions and training opportunities for new ringers. Our service leaders do not usually wear robes for family services, but a cassock alb and stole is normally worn for communion services and baptisms. Occasionally our worship is led by live musicians and singers, with a mixture of modern and more traditional worship songs. Hymns are sung too, although mainly to recorded backing tracks. We do not have a regular organist although there are organists we can call on for funerals and weddings.

Our Family Link Worker (FLW) and a team of helpers organise activities for children during most services. She also organises Muddy Church on one Sunday a month in the churchyard which runs concurrently with the communion service in church. On another Sunday the children go into the Church Room during the service for "Bake through the Bible" and there is also a group for older, secondary school children called "SPYING" which meets on a Sunday morning once a month. There is a weekly "Saplings" Mothers and Toddlers group on Monday mornings during term time in the Church Room or outside in the churchyard, which is very popular and regularly oversubscribed.

We have good links with the local uniformed organisations who attend for Remembrance Day and some festivals. Our Associate Minister and FLW regularly lead assemblies in the two CofE schools in the parish (Salford Priors and Dunnington) and the 'Open the Book' team also visit regularly. The Associate minister occasionally visits Salford House Residential Home opposite the church with communion for those residents who wish to partake and "Saplings" also visit the care home from time to time as the residents love to see and interact with the children.



Prayer is very important to us, so we keep our church open during the day and have a "Prayer Space" in the choir stalls. Here people are invited to sit or kneel quietly and are offered the opportunity to write any prayers or prayer requests on cards, placing them in a box for inclusion at our regular prayer times. We also hold a weekly daytime prayer meeting open to the whole Benefice.



As well as the weekly notice sheet produced and issued to all the churches which has a diary of the week's events, news items and topics for prayer, there is an up-to-date website and a Facebook page for St Matthew's. These are all useful in keeping the local community and congregation aware of all that is happening at St Matthew's and our minister records a weekly prayer video which is published on the village Facebook page.

Since Spring 2023 our Associate Minister has run a four week Explore course each term. Take up has been good and has led to an adult baptism and confirmation service in June 2023.

An initiative for placing a single vase of flowers inside the church by anyone wanting to remember a loved one or to celebrate a special event is proving very successful with the ability to "book a slot" via a dedicated website.

Our FLW organises several events for families over the summer school holidays which include things like Bell Boating on the River, dance workshops, pottery and Animal Encounters. These are open to children from the church, village and the schools. We hold an annual Family Fun Day in the churchyard around the time of St Matthew's Day in September, when we invite the whole community to come to enjoy games and activities plus a barbeque and Teddy Bear Zip wire challenge! This has always been very popular and attracts well over 200 people each year.



We were blessed by the sale of a property which was left to us in 1962 and the money has funded various capital building works both at the church and also in the two schools. This capital gives some security for the ongoing maintenance of our Grade 1 listed building which has been kept in exceptionally good repair.

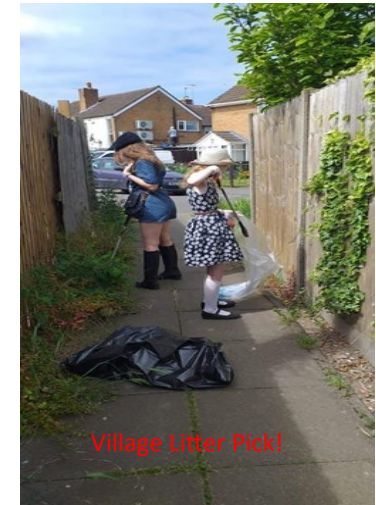
Our funds also help employ our part time Family Link Worker (FLW), but we are aware that this is a finite resource so our finances and giving are kept under constant review. We installed a Digital Collection Plate system last year which is available at the back of the nave at all times and has been an excellent source of extra income, especially from visitors where they can choose from a range of different funds to support with their donations.



Muddy Church shelter challenge



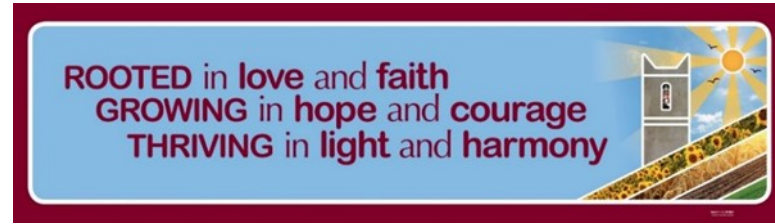
Family Fun Day



Village Litter Pick!

We have two church primary schools in our parish, the details of which are on the following pages

Salford Priors CofE Academy



At Salford Priors Church of England Academy, our vision is for all our children to be “Rooted in love and faith ~ Growing in hope and courage ~

Thriving in light and harmony” in conjunction with all of our stakeholders following the Christian values for life that Jesus taught us. We want our children to know that our school is a special place where we can all feel welcome, safe, supported, valued and respected. We pride ourselves on being at the heart of Salford Priors community and village, enjoying close links with our local families, neighbours, businesses, church and parish council.

Our school vision has been formulated in consultation with all stakeholders and is strongly based on Biblical scripture, in particular Ephesians 3:17-19: *‘May Christ dwell in your hearts through faith - that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.’* Our vision sits alongside our Diocese of Coventry Multi Academy Trust’s vision, based on John 10:10: *‘Together, pursuing life in all its fullness’.*



We are a small, rural village school, set amidst beautiful countryside, with 67 pupils currently on roll and 15 entry places per year. We enjoy a nurturing and inclusive culture, where everyone cares for each other as part of our ‘school family’. There are four main classrooms, all named after trees: Ash, Oak, Elm and Cherry. We have a broad and ambitious curriculum which is underpinned by our vision and Christian values: love, faith, hope, courage, generosity, peace and forgiveness. We aim to create a happy, safe and inclusive environment where everyone can feel valued and where we enable our pupils to flourish as accomplished, confident and caring learners.

Our pupils love learning outdoors, surrounded by fields and trees, taking part in regular sporting activities and Forest School sessions, enabling the children to learn more about nature, how to look after the environment and how to work effectively within a team. We also offer a wide range of extra-curricular after-school sports clubs (which are all free), as well as a variety of musical instrument lessons.

We enjoy a very strong relationship with St. Matthew's Church, including regular visits and services. The Reverend Sheila Bridge and the Ministry Team support us by leading weekly collective worship, as well as a weekly spiritual leadership club for the pupils (e.g. growing sunflowers and prayers for Ukraine). In addition, *Open the Book* visit us monthly to perform wonderful, interactive Bible Stories and music.

Our SIAMS inspection in February 2018 rated us as 'Good' in all aspects. Our Ofsted inspection in May 2022 acknowledged the positive impact of being part of the Trust and having good leadership, resulting in notable school improvement across several areas and moving up a whole grade from Inadequate (pre-academy) to Requires Improvement, with 3/5 main areas now deemed 'Good'. We are committed to continuous improvement and remain determined to provide the best education and life opportunities that we possibly can for all of our children, through God's grace.



Dunnington C of E (VA) Primary School



Dunnington Primary School is a Voluntary Aided church of England school within the parish of Salford Priors. Our vision statement is 'We care, we believe ,we succeed', which is supported by 1 Thessalonians 5:11 'encourage one another and build each other up'. The site is in the rural village of Dunnington set within beautiful grounds giving all pupils extensive opportunities to engage with the outdoor environment. The school has four dedicated class teachers supported by the interim Head Teacher Monica Gamble. A number of support staff and teaching assistants aid in the smooth running of the school. As a VA school we have 5 foundation governors all of whom have been approved and recommended by St Matthew's PCC.

The pupil numbers are about 100 most years with a single form entry of 15. Each class is a mixed year group with the exception of reception who have their own dedicated classroom and outdoor space for learning.

The school's recent OFSTED inspection (Feb '23) rated us as good and we aspire to be outstanding with the next inspection expected within the next 12 months. Our SIAMs inspection is expected to be in the academic year of 2024/5.

Our RE and Collective Worship follows Imaginor's 'Roots and Fruits' and we have regular input from Revd Sheila Bridge and Mrs Sarah Folkes as well as the Open the Book Team. Mrs Folkes leads a weekly 'Leading Learners Lunch Club' as well as leading Collective worship. This year we will be attending services in church at Christmas and Easter. The geographical distance between school and church prevent more regular visits.

The school aims to provide a happy and stimulating environment where children become confident and happy members of our community. There are high standards of attainment and behaviour set in order that everyone is able to develop to their full potential. We would welcome closer links with the Ministry Team and clergy in the future, building on the current foundations we have.



St Andrew's, Temple Grafton

Our parish includes the villages of Temple Grafton, Ardens Grafton and Blackcliffe, extending southwards as far as the River Avon at Hillborough. There has been a church in Temple Grafton since Saxon times, but our current (Grade 2 listed) building was constructed in 1875.

There are around 475 people living in the parish, and our church roll is 5. We have an excellent, well-maintained organ, although we currently have no regular organist for Sundays, the choir make good use of the organ for their weekly rehearsals. We can seat around 180 people in the church and when we have services with our village school, we are usually packed out. Our churchyard is maintained by a faithful crew of volunteers. The church is currently on the at risk register and our heating is unusable as the boiler chimney has been removed for safety reasons and the large cast iron heating pipes leak. The spire is in need of repair with an estimated cost of £250,000, none of which we can afford to fund at present. Some fund raising activity is being started.



St Andrew's has close links with our CofE primary school, which is located directly opposite the church and an excellent relationship with the head teacher who unfortunately is about to leave. The school collaborates with the church for Mothering Sunday and Christingle services, both of which are well attended. The Heart of England Group leads assemblies in the school on a regular basis together with monthly "Open the Book" productions. The school also holds services in the church at Harvest and at the end of each term with the Easter one being Holy Communion. These are strongly supported by parents, as well as the teachers and pupils.



Our village population is predominantly white middle-class with two Travellers sites. We have a village hall which is used for various local clubs and societies and a Travellers service once a month. There are weekly coffee mornings and games evenings as well as regular Country Fairs. It hosts the Village Medlers show in May, which is usually a stage musical performed to a surprisingly high standard.

Temple Grafton cricket club play every week in an idyllic setting in the grounds of the old Grafton Manor, followed by drinks at one of our two local pubs.

There is an active Women's Institute in the village.

Monthly family services, which were well attended have now been shelved for the time being, but we hope to restart them sometime soon. We presently have one monthly early Communion service and 4 Evensongs a year. We do have services at Christmas, Easter and Remembrance (shared alternately with Binton) and our Harvest Evensong is usually well attended.

We have an annual nine lessons and carol service at Christmas led by the choir who form the backbone of the Book of Common Prayer sung Evensong service with Ancient and Modern hymns, which rotates around the four smaller parishes.

St Andrew's is a congregation which has shrunk more since Covid and the lack of heating. We faithfully hope for the revival of the Family Service and an increase in our congregation once all the emergency repairs are completed. It is not always easy to make inroads into a prosperous area such as ours, because of the challenges from materialism and over-busy lives.

We see our school as one mission-field where we continue to make an impact and we are looking for opportunities to draw families further into the mainstream of our worship. Details of our church school sited opposite the church follows on the next page.





Temple Grafton Church of England Primary

“Together we shine” is our school’s vision statement and is based upon the Gospel of St Matthew 5:16; our belief is that by working together we can shine in all that the school does.

We are a small village school with 108 presently on the role and 15 entry places available each year. Children are taught in classes of two year groups. Although a church school, TG recognises the importance of giving all children the opportunity to learn about and respect the diversity, opinions and beliefs of others.

TG maintains high aspirations for all our children through a spirit of dedication and collaboration. This commitment to building a love of learning is firmly underpinned by the hope, wisdom, compassion and dignity embodied in our Christian values of nurture, respect, collaboration and inspiration.

TG is part of the Arden Forest C of E Multi Academy Trust whose vision is ‘inspiring educational excellence for everyone’. We had a **SIAMS** inspection in November 2016 which rated us as good in our distinctiveness and effectiveness as a C of E school, in meeting the needs of all learners, in leadership and management of the school and regarding the impact of our collective worship. **OFSTED** in December 2011 rated us an outstanding school providing pupils with an excellent education mainly due to the commitment of all staff in treating every child as an individual.

Our R. E. and collective worship follows Warwickshire SACRE provisions giving opportunities to explore both the Christian tradition and the beliefs and practices of other faiths. We are supported by St Andrew’s Church and other community religious groups such as the Open The Book team.

We hope the person appointed as Rector in the Benefice would be able to lead occasional whole school worship events, and they would be very welcome in our school.

St Milburga's, Wixford

The small village of Wixford lies between the large village of Bidford on Avon and the market town of Alcester with the river Arrow running through it. There are 63 properties here, ranging from Tudor Cottages through to modern houses. The majority are privately owned with there being only one Orbit social housing property. There are about 100 adults and 12 children currently living here. These range from young couples with children through to retired people, and there is an approximate 60/40 split with the majority being retired. We also have two permanent static home sites at either end of the village, with one being holiday homes and the other mainly being permanent residents. The holiday home site belongs to The Fish public house . The other public house, The Three Horseshoes offers a bar and restaurant. We also have a village hall which is in the process of being rebuilt with money that has been raised by the village.



We have no shops or schools, local primary children going to the Voluntary Aided Church of England school in nearby Dunnington. There is no public transport to facilitate this. Secondary school age children attend either the Alcester Grammar school or one of the two other secondary schools there. There is a school bus for secondary school children and a public bus service through the village most days of the week.



Gorse Horse House

St Milburga's, our village church, is in fact a chapel of ease, with the mother church being St Giles across the fields in the next village of Exhall. This is also reflected in the current PCC and churchwardens from the two villages operating together. In times past the vicar lived at Exhall and rode his horse here to preach. Whilst here, the horse was stabled in a rare gorse horse house, one of only two in Warwickshire, and this remains in our churchyard.

There has been some form of worship of the site since 1086 and the earliest parts of the church date back to the 12th century. The church's only utility is electricity, but the building is in good order and well maintained as is the churchyard.

We have a monthly Holy Communion and, from May to October a monthly Compline. The Holy Communion is mainly supported by three village families and a handful of worshippers from Exhall and Temple Grafton. The Compline is better supported with worshippers from across the benefice. We would like to nurture this cross Benefice interaction, and continue to encourage others to join us.

Advent and Christmas are the main services that are well supported by the villagers. These special Festivals are well publicised with every villager having a personal invitation as well as being announced on social media.

It's our hope to build on these well attended services to reach out into the hearts of our occasional worshippers from our village and encourage them to have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and become part of a thriving church community.



Monthly Service Pattern—Sunday Worship

Village	1st Sunday	2nd Sunday	3rd Sunday	4th Sunday	5th Sunday
Bidford	10.30am Café Church	10am Holy Communion	10am Holy Communion	10am Holy Communion	
Binton		10.30am Family Service			8am Holy Communion
Exhall			8am Holy Communion	11am Village Praise	10.30am Group Family Service in one of the churches
Salford Priors	8.45am Holy Communion 10.30am Family Service	10.30am Holy Communion + Muddy Church	10.30am Family Service + Bake through the Bible 5pm Breathing Space	10.30am Holy Communion	
Temple Grafton		8am Holy Communion			
Wixford				8am Holy Communion 6.30pm Compline (during summer)	

Midweek Events and Activities

Village	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Bidford		7.30pm Bellringing Practice		2.30pm Mothers Union (monthly)		2.00pm Messy Church (Monthly)
Binton						
Exhall						
Salford Priors	10.15am "Saplings" Mother/Carer & Toddlers Group (Term time)	7.30pm Bellringing Practice (Monthly)				10am "Coffee Connect" (Monthly)
Temple Grafton						
Wixford						

Occasional Offices (2022)

Village	Baptisms	Weddings	Funerals
Bidford	11	6	11
Binton	1	1	0
Exhall	0	0	2
Salford Priors	15	5	14
Temple Grafton	2	1	2
Wixford	0	0	1

Attendance

Village	Early Communions	Main Service	Evenings	Electoral Roll
Bidford	-	31	-	55
Binton	13	22	-	18
Exhall	8	22	-	18
Salford Priors	12	50	14	54
Temple Grafton	7	(26)	-	5
Wixford	10	-	12	3

Finances (2022)

Village	Income	Expenditure	Unrestricted Reserves	Restricted Reserves	Notes
Bidford	£29,818	£23,227	£10,026	£45,974	
Binton	£6,263	£11,727	£3,050	£54,951	£5,462 Roof and wall repairs
Exhall	£15,969	£13,872	£3,703	£5,196	
Salford Priors	£63,765	£120,442	£133,913	£9,815	Income includes a large one off gift Expenditure includes a large one off payment for new toilets
Temple Grafton	£6,448	£11,013	£8,397	-	Expenditure includes some major
Wixford	£7,685	£5,170	£10,817	£8,577	

What are our relationships like with other churches and faiths?

We used to be part of the 'Churches Together in Bidford and District', made up of representatives of the Anglican group, Bidford Methodist, Dunnington Baptist, Bidford Baptist and Roman Catholic congregations. However, for reasons which are unclear, this group ceased to function at the same time as the Methodist church in Bidford closed. We have good relationships with the Bidford Baptist church (The Barn) although this does not extend to joint events or services.

There are no formal worship centres for other faiths in the area.

Where would you live?

The Vicarage is in Bidford, where we have a four bedroomed house with a single garage and a large garden, situated in a quiet service road parallel with the main Salford Road. The house was extended downstairs and reconfigured upstairs by the diocese in 2010. It has a large study with separate access from the front lobby, a refitted large kitchen/diner, utility room, downstairs toilet and 2 reception rooms. There is an en-suite master bedroom plus 3 further good sized bedrooms and a family bathroom.

