

A TEAM RECTOR FOR THE BENEFICE OF THE LORDSBRIDGE TEAM

THE PARISHES OF BARTON, CALDECOTE, COMBERTON, COTON, DRY DRAYTON,
GT EVERSDEN, LT EVERSDEN, HARDWICK, HARLTON, HASLINGFIELD, TOFT



Welcome

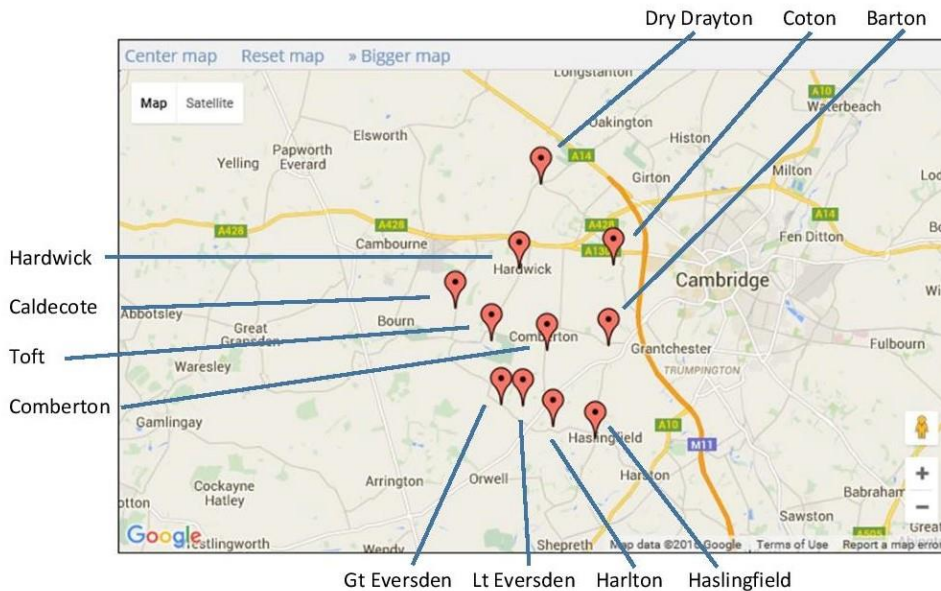
We hope that you will find this profile and appointment pack helpful in deciding whether God is calling you to be Team Rector of the Lordsbridge Team. This post will provide exciting opportunities for someone who is committed to rural and semi-rural ministry and wishes to work collaboratively with a wide range of colleagues and communities. We are looking for an experienced priest who has proven leadership skills, a creative approach to growing the kingdom of God in this area, and a sense of fun!

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1. Introduction & Overview

The Lordsbridge Team of Churches is a network of worshipping communities, spread over 11 villages, in an area of about 9 by 5 miles west of Cambridge, and served by a Core Team of four incumbent-status clergy and approximately 12 active assistant clergy and LLMs. The work and witness in the parishes is held together and made possible across multiple communities by the framework provided by the Team.



Created from four smaller benefices, the Lordsbridge Team of Churches, now a team ministry, celebrated its 10th birthday in 2021. Each of the incumbent clergy in the team has responsibility for a particular geographical area so that each village knows who its vicar is. Each also takes the lead in specific ministries and projects across the whole benefice, according to need, interest and expertise. Together they share leadership across the whole patch and the network of worshipping communities.

There are more than 17 worshipping communities or “ecclesial experiments” across the parishes. Eleven of these are congregations worshipping in a more or less traditional way in our ancient parish churches. Other forms of worship include: a gathering for seniors, toddler church, a youth service, Café Church, Wild Church and Forest Church. As a result of the COVID pandemic a regular online congregation has developed using Zoom and online worship resources have also been extended. Other approaches to prayer and worship are developed as opportunities arise.

In 2023, c.2% of the local population was in a Lordsbridge church on an average Sunday and 3% attended a service (including mid-week services, baptisms and harvest celebrations) in any one week in October. Attendance at services in Advent, Christmas and other key festivals is much greater. Although the electoral roll has declined in recent years, the size of the Lordsbridge worshipping community has remained stable at approx. 420 (from ‘Statistics for Mission’ data).

2. Our Ethos

The Team exists to *support and enable* the mission and ministry of the parishes. Principally through:

- **Praying and Partying Together**

Creating opportunities to celebrate together and to build relationships: through fifth Sunday Team Services; through Team Ministers' Gatherings; and through groups and courses run across parishes. Long ago the Team Council expressed the desire that prayer would be the 'engine house' of the team.

- **Enabling Collaboration and Partnership**

Through the sharing of ideas and resources across the Benefice; through helping volunteers and church officers collaborate and support one another.

- **Providing Support for our Parishes**

Through the work of our Team Administrator, who provides support for parish officers, for services, life events, safeguarding, and much more.

- **Creating Support for the Lead Ministers**

Through our weekly 'Core' meetings where we can plan together, pray together, ask advice, hold ourselves accountable and offer mutual support.

We have evolved together becoming a mutually supportive network that retains the local strengths and essence of its individual parishes while encouraging collaboration.

Across the Benefice we seek to encourage the parishes to:

- Develop a 'Mixed Ecology' that nurtures the traditional and embraces new initiatives.
- Partner with others of goodwill in the parishes to identify and tackle social need, and work for the common good.
- Empower volunteers.
- Share ideas, resources and skills across the benefice.
- Enjoy life together.

We actively support 'mixed ecology ministry' and in our context this means continuing with a traditional parish ministry of services, pastoral care, and community involvement, whilst also developing new mission initiatives. These are some of our Recent Initiatives:



3. The Person We Are Looking For

In addition to the prayer life, preaching & teaching, pastoral and leadership skills that are essential for any Team Rector, we feel that there are some things that are distinctive to this post. The person appointed will have the experience to lead an unusually large multi-parish team.

We are looking for someone who will enjoy working with us and will help us to flourish. That person will:

- feel called to work in a rural and semi-rural setting.
- help us to build upon our strengths so that God's love becomes more prominent throughout our communities.
- have the ability to reflect theologically on current practice and new ideas.
- have enthusiasm for working collaboratively.
- be confident and comfortable with a variety of worship styles.
- be financially literate and be able to apply this strategically.
- have the energy and creativity to develop and implement change sensitively.
- have the experience to further develop relationships across parish, team and deanery boundaries.

4. Team Rector Role and Responsibilities

Team Leadership

- To take responsibility for the spiritual leadership of the Team as a whole, sharing this with the Core Team, leaving space for each incumbent to shape and lead the ministry and mission in the particular communities for which they are responsible.
- To embody, shape and promote the vision for and shared identity of the Team across all parishes and worshipping communities and with the Lordsbridge Chapter.
- To work collaboratively to build and sustain the Team; and to maintain it as a model of excellence and as a flagship multi-parish, multi-minister, mixed ecology Team of rural parishes in the diocese.
- To safeguard and develop the principles, values and ethos of the Team.
- To have oversight of the medium-term sustainability of the mission and ministry of the Team.
- To be sensitive to the well-being of the members of the Core Team.
- To sustain the Team as a valued training benefice for lay and ordained ministerial students and for curates.

Team Roles

- To convene and chair the Team Council, and work with the Team Treasurer to maintain Team finances.
- To convene and informally chair the weekly Core Team meeting as the primary touching point for the members of the Team - for prayer, development of ideas, vision “compass setting”, mutual support, Q&A, shared decision making and accountability.
- To have shared oversight and delivery of the practical and organisational tasks that work best across the whole Team and ensure that what is required is in place.
- To have management responsibility for the Team Administrator and the support provided to the ministers, parishes and church communities; to ensure that payroll and employment responsibilities are fulfilled.

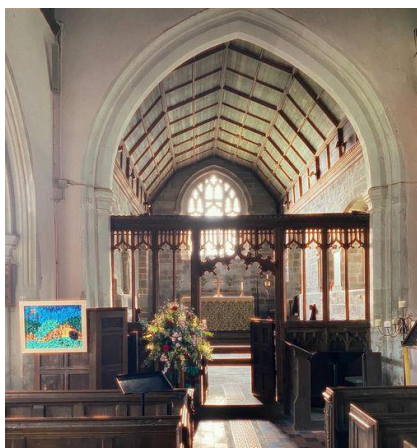
Team Development

- To recruit Team Vicars in partnership with the Bishop and in consultation with the parishes and worshipping communities; to recruit, or ensure recruitment, of other Core Team members.
- To ensure the development and deployment of the Chapter of lay and ordained ministers so that skills are shared and ministers are enabled to flourish.
- To encourage the development of further vocations to ordained, LLM, ALM or other forms of mission and ministry in the Team.
- To support ministers and others in contributing to research and to national conversations about the vision and strategy for the C of E.

Safeguarding

- To ensure that safeguarding responsibilities are fulfilled at parish and at Team level.

The Team Rector will also be the parish priest of at least two of the Lordsbridge parishes.



Children's Easter Artwork at
St Peter's Coton



Café Church in Caldecote

5. The Ministry Team

Lordsbridge has an active and collaborative Core Ministry Team which operates around the principle of shared leadership, shared support, and shared accountability. The Team consists of three stipendiary clergy of incumbent status - a Team Rector and two Team Vicars – and a minister in secular employment as a fourth incumbent. Our Team Curate and Team Administrator are also part of this Core Team. Each incumbent member of this Core Team takes responsibility for particular geographic parishes – he or she is their Vicar - and takes the lead for particular projects and activities that are cross-Team. The Team Curate works across some but not all the villages.

The day-to-day functioning of the Lordsbridge Team is overseen by this Core Team of incumbent-status 'lead ministers' who, with the Team Curate and Team Administrator, meet weekly to pray and plan tasks and activities.

The members of the Core Team and their parish responsibilities are as follows:

- Vacant – Team Rector – Lead Minister in Comberton and Toft.
- Revd Clare Coates – Team Vicar; Lead Minister in Caldecote with Childerley, Dry Drayton and Hardwick.
- Revd Claire Robertson – Team Vicar; Lead Minister for Barton, Coton, Harlton and Haslingfield (*Acting Team Rector*).
- Revd Charles Fraser – Team MSE; Lead Minister in Great Eversden and Little Eversden. Charles is also Head of Divinity at The Leys School in Cambridge.
- Revd Barnabas Leeke – Team Curate; based in Coton and working across the Team.

There is a wider ministry team which consists of:

- Lordsbridge Team Chapter - We have a strong, committed wider team of self-supporting and retired clergy, and LLMs (Licensed Lay Ministers or Readers). Some of these have a peripatetic role and some serve in a specific local church ministry team.
- Local Ministry Teams – These meet at parish level and, as well as lay and ordained members of the Team Chapter, also include Authorised Lay Ministers (ALMs), churchwardens and others. They function in different ways in different church communities depending on both the context and the mix of ministers and other roles serving within that church.

- Students - We offer attachments and placements to ordinands, curates and trainee lay ministers wanting to explore Team ministry and/or ministry and mission based in villages.

6. ADMINISTRATION

- Rebecca Herrick – Team Administrator, working 15 hours a week providing administrative support for the Team Rector/Vicars, as well as for weddings, funerals, communications, and safeguarding.



A Celebration of Lay Ministry at St Peter's, Barton



Art Exhibition at St Mary's, Comberton



Communion Service at Dry Drayton Church



Church Fete at St Mary's, Hardwick

7. The Local Area

The communities of the Lordsbridge area range in size from a few hundred to nearly three thousand. The congregations similarly vary in size, although some of the smaller villages maintain a very active church life.

Each village is self-contained, set in mostly arable farmland and, though linked by ancient bridle paths, they are several miles apart by road and there is little or no public transport between them. All have established and individual identities and most have strong community spirit which, along with the rural environment, is very popular with local inhabitants. There are many beautiful, listed buildings (including the churches). The village populations and congregations are diverse – from manual and agricultural workers to professionals and academics, from local families with historic links with particular villages to newcomers, some of whom may be here for a temporary period.

Different villages have expanded with new housing at different times. Some development has been extensive (e.g. Hardwick in the 1980s and at present, and Caldecote's Highfields development around 2000) bringing in new families and changing the demography. This means that the location of some churches represents historical village centres rather than the present population distribution. New housing developments are on-going with a number of edge-of-village and in-fill developments underway. In addition, there is a planned major development to the immediate northwest of the Lordsbridge Team's area (along the A428) and within the deanery which will drive significant local population growth. This is presently on hold.

While rural in many ways, all the villages of the Team are influenced by their proximity to Cambridge. Cambridge is a vibrant city (population c146,000) within the agricultural countryside of East Anglia. It is internationally renowned for its universities, Addenbrookes and Royal Papworth Hospitals (with the largest Biomedical Campus in Europe) and the high-technology Silicon Fen concentration of bioscience and software businesses. Cambridge is the base for three Church of England Theological Education Institutions (TEIs): Ridley Hall, Westcott House and the Eastern Region Ministry Course (ERMC).

There are many employment opportunities locally, and Cambridge and other local stations have excellent transport links, with fast trains to London, Stansted and Peterborough (for East Coast Mainline and the Midlands) and there is easy access to the M11, A1 and A14. The area is one of the most economically buoyant and fast-growing in the country, which may be affected by the proposed East West Rail (EWR) link, whose current planned route is through the middle of our area.

Local schools include the seven village primary schools in the Lordsbridge Team area, four of which are Church schools. At secondary level Comberton Village College and Comberton Sixth Form (both rated highly by OFSTED inspections) are in the benefice, and St Bede's is a church secondary school in Cambridge. There are other sixth form options in Cambridge too and various independent schools ranging from pre-prep to sixth form. There is also a Village

College at Cambourne. The Lordsbridge Team of Churches work with the West Cambridge Christian Youth Ministries (WCCYM) on mission strategies for young people.

There are good ecumenical partnerships with local Baptists (Comberton, Barton & Hardwick), Methodists (Haslingfield) and Roman Catholics (gathering in Cambourne or Cambridge). Toft has an LEP between the Methodists and the Anglicans. There are local projects and opportunities to work together in each of these villages.

Though some villages are short of public space, across the area there are a range of cafes, shops and pubs which reach beyond their immediate locality, e.g. Coton Orchard Café, Flock at Burwash Manor in Barton, various village pubs, cafes and restaurants. There are a number of farm and village shops and village Post Offices with three small supermarkets.

This is a beautiful and diverse setting in which to live and minister, with much potential for growing mission and Christian presence.



Palm Sunday Procession at
Harlton Church



Sunday Morning Prayer at
St Helen's, Little Eversden



Spring Feast at
St Andrew's,
Toft

8. Worship Across the Villages

Every Sunday (except fifth Sundays) there are at least ten main services of worship across the Team including BCP and CW Holy Communion, All Age Worship, Morning Prayer and Evensong. In addition to these are the fresh expressions of church with different meeting times and formats. Clergy and lay people lead collective worship on a regular basis in all the church schools and some of the community schools.

	Population 2021	Usual Sunday Attendance 2023	Regular Worshipping Community 2023 ¹	Electoral Roll	Youth	Schools	Other churches	Fresh Expressions
Barton	819	27	40	47	-	Church primary	Barton Baptist Church	Monthly Forest Church
Caldecote & Childerley	2050	10	10	25	-	Community primary	-	Monthly Café Church
Comberton	2250	43	66	89	-	Community primary	Comberton Baptist Church	Monthly Oasis Teas
Coton	952	12	27	24	-	Church primary	-	Monthly "Messy Church"
Dry Drayton	698	28	69	32	-	Church primary	Quakers	Monthly Forest Church
Great & Little Eversden	797	8	20	27	-	-	-	-
Hardwick	2658	26	71	49	-	Community primary	Hardwick Evangelical Church	Monthly Wild Church Weekly Toddler Church
Harlton	316	15	20	29	-	-	-	-
Haslingfield	1531	35	76	66	Café Saintz	Endowed primary	Haslingfield Methodist Church	Monthly Forest Church
Toft LEP	572	13	30	29	-	-	Toft is a LEP with Toft Methodist Church	-
Lordsbridge- wide					West Cambridge Christian Youth Ministries (WCCYM)	Comberton Village College (CVC) & Sixth Form		Thirst (WCCYM) Zoom Worship at Home

¹Regular worshipping community is one worshipping at least once a month including children

9. Team Council

In order to oversee Team-wide activities, there is a Team Council, comprising a lay representative from each parish and the members of the Core Ministry Team, which meets three times a year. This supports Team-wide vision setting, coordinates Ministry Share, employs the administrative staff, oversees youthwork, Team communications and other Team-wide projects. Each parish has its own PCC and its own finances, to support decision making at a local level.

Team-Wide Activities and Projects

Team-wide activities provide ways in which pooling resources can lead to outcomes that would not be possible at an individual parish level and opportunities to bind our parishes together for worship and shared events:

- **Supporting Prayer and Spirituality:** An annual Prayer Pilgrimage (now part of “Thy Kingdom Come”) encourages congregation members prayerfully to visit other churches in the Team. Prayer stations and quiet mornings are held to offer the experience of (and demonstrate) a different way of nourishing our spiritual lives. Since the COVID pandemic we have also offered Zoom Night Prayer.
- **Being a Training Benefice:** We have a good reputation both as a supportive environment for students for village-based Team ministry and as a place for innovative practices. Members of the wider ministry team are encouraged to contribute, for example, to thinking in pastoral theology and to the national conversation around sustainable rural Fresh Expressions of Church. The Team was part of a PhD study into the ‘mixed ecology of church’, started in 2021.
- **Developing Mission:** We have been exploring and implementing patterns of mission and ministry that reach beyond ‘inherited’ approaches to being church. In the recent past we had a Pioneer Curate in the Team who led this work. We are also conscious of the need to respond to the edge of village developments taking place.
- **Resourcing Worship:** Final agreement for the allocation of ministers for Sunday services is made at Core Team level, so that any absences or other gaps are covered, and responsibility is shared. Worship resources created locally are made available for adaptation by colleagues via Dropbox. During the COVID pandemic we developed Zoom services, which have continued since then, serving a congregation who find travel to a church difficult. We produce a weekly reflection based on the lectionary readings.
- **Administering Weddings and Funerals:** The Team Administrator organises weddings, including banns and invoicing, and couples have been invited to an annual

Marriage Preparation event run by the incumbents. The Team Administrator is also responsible for much of the standard administration for funerals.

- **Communicating Team-Wide:** The Team Administrator updates the website regularly and a monthly newsletter is produced highlighting worship and social events across the Team.
- **Working with Young People:** We are a member of West Cambridge Christian Youth Ministries (WCCYM), an organisation of local churches and youth workers, who run groups in the secondary school and sixth form, host a monthly area-wide youth service, an annual youth weekend and a summer camp. In the past the Team Rector has been invited to be a trustee of WCCYM. There are a number of worship and social activities aimed at families and young people throughout the Team e.g. Cafe Saintz, Wild Church, Forest Church, Toddler group etc. The Team has close links with the Primary Schools across the villages.
- **Worshipping and Celebrating Together:** Fifth Sundays are Lordsbridge Sundays and we invite congregations to “worship with friends or make new ones” at a single service, where we take the opportunity to pool musical and other resources, and have some fun together, in choral, contemporary, or some other style. Ascension Day is a well-established occasion for shared evening worship. Once a year, working together with WCCYM, all the churches of the area gather for an area-wide multi-denominational celebration with an invited speaker.



Lordsbridge Team Pilgrimage at St Mary's, Great Eversden



Preparing Mothers' Day Flowers for the Haslingfield Village Service

10. The Parishes

St Mary's Comberton

Who We Are



St Mary's Church, Comberton is one of the Lordsbridge Team churches. We currently have 88 people on our electoral role (April 2024). The average size of our congregation in 2023 was 37 adults and 6 children.

St Mary's is a warm, supportive and welcoming church. The quality of its hospitality helps all to feel at ease and at home, whether they are familiar with the format of service orders or not. Church at St Mary's is very much about people, relationships and community well-being. Here's what a selection of our congregation say about St Mary's:

- One of our Older Church Members:
"St Mary's is a welcoming place, partly because of the two levels of windows and light walls making it feel very light and airy. Many visitors comment that it is a friendly church."
- One of our Younger Church Members:
"I like listening to the stories. I like it when there are new colouring sheets and I can colour and listen to the service at the same time. It is a place that I enjoy being with my dad and brother."
- One of our Newest Church Members:
"St. Mary's is a very welcoming church. Neither too large nor too small and blessed with more than one organist and a choir, not to mention excellent coffee and biscuits after the service! I wish that more newcomers to Comberton would discover our church. Having been very much involved with another village church for many years I marvel at the extraordinary teamwork of the clergy, committees and volunteers who keep the family and fabric of St. Mary's so strong."

Some of the St Mary's Church Congregation, Summer 2023



With the church building a short walk from the village centre, the church family understands that there is a need to make that walk as worthwhile as possible, and to make sure that the church makes that walk into the village too.

The church family understands the missional imperative to share the good news of Jesus, both in actions and words. Many of the members are involved in community organisations and groups, providing a positive impact on life in the village. The church's annual events, including coffee mornings and seasonal fairs, held in the Village Hall, also bring the church into village life. St Mary's is active in the life of the Lordsbridge Team of Churches, sharing in its missional aims.

Ministry Team

At St Mary's there is a self-supporting local priest, two Licensed Lay Ministers and three other priests who regularly take services. The Team Curate is also part of the Team.

Members of the congregation act as welcomers, ring the bells, read lessons, lead intercessions, and assist with the chalice. There are three organists who play regularly on rotation and a group of singers lead the congregation at most services.

The Church Building



St Mary's from the South path

The church is situated on high ground about half a mile south of the village centre and dates from the 13th century. It is a grade I listed building.

The church is open plan with an ancient screen to the chancel. There are no effigies or family tombs, which gives it a light and spacious appearance. The pews can accommodate about 100 but this can be increased with chairs for special occasions. Music is provided by a small pipe organ given in memory of those who fell in the First World War. We also have an

electronic keyboard which can be used. The 14th century tower has four bells which swing chime and are hung from the original 15th century frame. A major restoration was completed in 2000 mainly to the tower and bells. At the same time the interior was redecorated, and other remedial measures taken.

In 2007 a new porch was built on the north side comprising an entrance lobby with level access direct from the car park and accessible toilet facilities and in 2012 a servery was installed in the northwest corner of the church to provide refreshments after services.

The church has an old but effective oil-fired heating system. The sound system has been updated in the last 12 months and there is a projector and electronically operated screen. There is a hearing loop in good working order.

In 2016 the local branch of the National Association of Decorative and Fine Arts Societies (NADFAS) began recording the contents of the church – stained glass, woodwork, silver, textiles etc. Over approximately 3 years they have produced a comprehensive, illustrated list of contents and their history.

A Quinquennial inspection was conducted in April 2024. Roof repairs have also been completed in 2024. It is estimated that these repairs will prolong the life of the lead Nave roof by 15-20 years. This work is being funded by The Friends of St Mary's. The hard standing car park has recently (May 2024) been resurfaced (gravel) and an area of tarmac has been laid to provide parking for up to 4 disabled vehicles. A grant was secured to fund the majority of this project, the remainder of the cost being met by The Friends of St Mary's.

The church does not have a hall. Some social events are held in the church but where more space is required, the village hall is rented.

After the sale of the Victorian vicarage in Church Lane, St Mary's lost its Sunday School premises in the vicarage stable block. At this time money was raised to build a new facility, the children's barn, situated just over the southeast corner of the churchyard wall on land leased from a local farmer. This is a comfortable timber structure with good electrical heating and lighting but no water supply and is used for children's activities during some Sunday morning services.

St Mary's has undertaken to maintain the churchyard in line with the Caring for God's Acre initiative and in May 2022 proudly accepted a Silver award from the Wildlife Trust's Churchyard Conservation Award Scheme. The steering committee for this project are 'going for gold' and are hopeful that this will be achieved in 2024. If so, St Mary's will be the first in Cambridgeshire to receive the highest accolade.



Spring Meadow at St Mary's

What We Do

Our main Sunday service is at 9.30am and is either Morning Worship or Holy Communion. There is a BCP service at 8.00am on two Sundays a month. Activities for children take place once a month in the barn and at other times there are activity sheets in church. The children love sharing what they have learnt with the whole congregation.

Mid-week Morning Prayer is on a Tuesday at 9.30am and is led by clergy or laity on Zoom. Weekly Compline is on a Wednesday at 8.00pm on Zoom.

There are three home groups all of which meet fortnightly on a Thursday in the morning, afternoon and evening respectively. The groups have come to have an important pastoral role and can be strongly supportive during times of difficulty.

There are occasional evening services such as Compline during Lent and on special festivals such as Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday and Ascension Day. Special services during the year include Mothering Sunday, Harvest Festival, Christingle, All Souls, Remembrance Sunday and Midnight Mass. There is a Carol Service each year which includes a choir.

Our own Order of Service booklets are used or are printed specifically for the day. Hymns are taken from “New English Hymnal” and “New Hymns and Worship Songs” with extra hymns copied under licence.

Oasis Teas is a joint initiative with the Baptist Church. It is held in the afternoon of the fourth Thursday of the month in the Village Hall. Anyone is welcome and we gather to drink tea (or coffee) eat cake, chat, enjoy a quiz, listen to a short inspiring and interesting talk, eat more

cake, and drink more tea! The talks are varied and usually (although not always) have a faith element. In August we have our Holiday at Home Club which has a variety of activities, a talk, a short worship service and a scrumptious lunch and afternoon tea.

The Social Committee organises a number of events during the year, primarily for fundraising, that are well attended and appreciated by many in the village. There are coffee mornings, plant sales, a harvest supper,



Remembrance Sunday
at St Mary's



Easter Garden at St Mary's

the summer fete (held in the church and churchyard), concerts and talks by local and visiting speakers and the occasional Men's Breakfast. In the past few years during Lent, a soup café has been organised in the church building with donations going to a chosen charity.

An Art Exhibition is held in the church annually in November. It attracts many talented local artists and a percentage of the money gained from sales is donated to the church.

Where We Are

Comberton is an historic rural village in the green belt of South Cambridgeshire, approximately 5 miles southwest of Cambridge on the B1046. It has almost 1,000 dwellings and a population of around 2,500. It has an attractive blend of old and new and is well served by local education, sports and community facilities.



Comberton Village Green

There is a vibrant village hall that is used for community events, sales, plays, cinema, etc. There is also a good pub, the Three Horseshoes, which serves real ale and meals and opens as a café during the day. The village is also served by a doctors' surgery, dentist, accountant, hairdresser, village shops and post office. Comberton is an active village with football pitches, bowling green, tennis courts and an outdoor swimming pool. There is a village caravan and camping site and this results in visitors from many nationalities visiting the church. Comberton is twinned with Le Vaudreuil, near Rouen in Haute-Normandie in northern France.

The Meridian Primary School takes children from Comberton, Toft and the Eversdens. Ofsted rated the school as good. (July 2023). Comberton Village College and Sixth Form is rated as outstanding by Ofsted (February 2013).

What We Want To Do Next

The PCC would like to see the church building being used by community groups and be more accessible for all users. With this in mind, the PCC conducted a consultation process where interested parties were asked to imagine what the building could be used for in the future and to raise any practical issues they have encountered when at St Mary's. The responses have been used to produce a statement of needs.

Although access to the building is good, movement around the building can be tricky for those with mobility issues. We would like to progress to a feasibility study into what could be possible within the building to improve accessibility for all.

Other Things You Need to Know

Safeguarding

Safeguarding children and adults at risk is central to living the Gospel of Love Christ gave us. We follow the House of Bishop's *Promoting a Safer Church* policy as well as all the diocesan guidance on implementation. We follow *safer recruitment* practice with all our volunteers who work with children or adults at risk.

The Friends of St Mary's

St Mary's is supported financially by The Friends of St Mary's (FOSM) a charitable organisation who organise fundraising specifically for the upkeep of the fabric of the building and churchyard. In 2023, FOSM raised a substantial sum (donations and a grant) to fund the resurfacing of the church car park and installation of hard-standing disabled parking. They have also funded repairs and improvements to the exterior access.

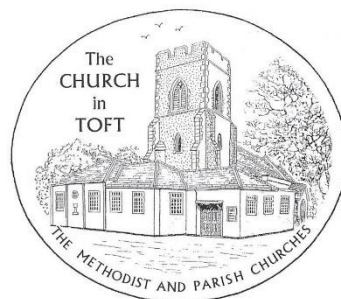


St Mary's Church, Comberton

The Church In Toft – St Andrew's And Toft Methodist Church (Lep)

Who We Are

Toft has two churches, St Andrews' Parish Church and the Methodist Church, which under a covenant signed in 2003 between the two, means they are collectively called "the Church in Toft", sharing both social and religious events for the community. In the agreement we kept our two buildings, one modern, capacity about 90 and one ancient Parish Church with a capacity of 120+ (e.g. British Legion Remembrance Sunday). We are part of the Lordsbridge Team and linked with the Cambridge Methodist circuit.



What We Do



St Andrew's Church, Toft

Our service pattern has evolved from a rather rigid beginning to a more easily remembered and useful pattern. We alternate with Comberton early BCP communion, it being 8.30am in Toft on second, fourth and fifth Sundays: we sadly stopped Evensong a few years ago. Whether the 11.00am service is Holy Communion or Morning Prayer depends on who is running it and the balance of services in the two churches for that month.

Every Wednesday morning at 9.15am we have a half-hour service of Morning Prayer. This is very

ecumenical with not only the Church in Toft but occasional visitors from elsewhere. Services are shared with members of the Methodist circuit. Our Methodist Minister, is at present, appointed in September 2022, Rev'd Charity Nzegwu. She also looks after Royston Methodist Church, where she lives and the Methodist congregation in Haslingfield.

We have one LLM, Mrs Barbara Preece, who does not take Sunday services but does special services – in particular the Spring Feast and the Christmas Tree service; she also leads many of the funerals. A self-supporting Minister who lives in Comberton, Rev'd Professor Michael Reiss takes most of our 8.30am BCP services. A retired Methodist Minister lives in the village and takes at least one service a month. In addition, our services are led by Local Lay Preachers from the Circuit and retired clergy of both denominations.

We use our own printing for our services of Holy Communion and Morning Prayer and have devised our own booklet of short services for Wednesday mornings. We have sufficient copies

of Common Worship for general use and our hymns are drawn from A&M revised and New Hymns and Worship Songs. The Churchwarden draws up a monthly rota for both churches as to who is doing what at each service. We have a prayer list, highlighting some aspect of Toft life for each day of the month. Music can be provided by a good pipe organ, fully restored some years ago and regularly serviced. At present neither church has a regular organist, and the choir leader plays for one service; other services use discs. We employ an external organist for weddings. As a rule there is either a Methodist or Anglican Sidesman/Steward at each service and one Reader who can be from either church.



Toft Methodist Church

Baptisms usually take place during an 11.00am Communion service. Marriages/services of thanksgiving average about one a year. As part of the LEP we have a Sharing Buildings Agreement with Toft Methodist Church just for marriages. There have been several remarriages after divorce in the church. Having discussed this the PCC agreed that remarriage after divorce should be permitted, provided the incumbent felt it to be acceptable and it was within the Diocesan and national guidelines. All such couples are offered a service of blessing if remarriage does not seem suitable, or our Reader is taking the service. Funerals are more frequent with quite a number wishing to be buried or for the ashes to be buried in our garden of remembrance. The churchyard at present has space.

The choir, made up of enthusiastic singers from different Churches and with non-religious backgrounds meet and practice on Monday evenings and sing at special services.



Easter Sunrise Service

Some annual highlights: the dawn service with fire and Easter candle on Easter Sunday; the Spring Feast week-end shared with the community; Remembrance Sunday; Christmas Tree Weekend and other Christmas events. We are always part of any community planning committee for special events.

The PCC meets four (sometimes five) times a year; there is a finance and a standing committee who meet when required. One representative regularly represents the Parish at Deanery Synod, at Lordsbridge Team meetings, on the People's Hall Committee. Since 2005 the Parish has been linked with Comberton. The Electoral roll currently

stands at 27. The average attendance of people over 16 on Sundays with our Methodist friends is around 15 to 20.

The church building originally dates from 13th Century, though there was extensive rebuilding in the 19th Century. There are six bells, four of ancient origin, and two added over the Millennium. We no longer have a Toft band but ringers from the village practice with those from the Eversdens and we support each other when bells are requested for weddings etc. Toft tower is very popular and we have many visiting bands.



The PCC in 1996 decided that as the Parish Church was the largest public building in the village it should be made fit for the 21st century. To that end, in the following 13 years we installed a tea and coffee making facility which also houses the Church's china and cutlery; the front pews were removed to enable concerts, etc. to have more space; a sound and loop system was installed, and the pulpit was lowered. The roof of the tower was also redone, including resetting the parapets. These works were funded by donations, a lot of hard work fundraising and very successful grant applications for funds from various sources.

The Church is justly proud of the fact that it is in excellent condition, and that during the winter months parishioners are kept reasonably warm. A new first-class heating system, with external wall-hung boilers was installed in 2001. This has proved not only excellent for our worship, but it uses much less oil than its predecessor. Finally, in 2009 a North porch to balance the south porch was built to house a lavatory. It is disability user-friendly and has baby changing facilities. A quinquennial inspection is due this autumn.

The churchyard is mostly looked after by volunteers who mow it regularly through the growing season and two members of the congregation who trim and keep individual areas tidy. The northern churchyard wall and a large section of the west and south wall have been rebuilt. The trees, 12 limes in all, in the old traditional planting for the 12 apostles and a giant redwood are professionally cared for at some expense. Just over the wall, one of the village wells was

restored by Church members and is now part of the Spring Feast ritual.



Toft Spring Feast at the Well

An Annual Report and financial statements are presented at the General Meeting. Parishioners are encouraged to contribute to the upkeep of the Church and the Treasurer is very active in promoting the use of gift aid both for regular contributors and one-off donations.

The PCC opted for accounts to be prepared on an accruals basis as this makes it easier to budget and identify trends of income and expenditure more rapidly. The Parish Share is paid in instalments and in full. The PCC has an annual Budget to control income and expenditure, which is tightly monitored. A percentage of the year's income is donated to charity. Fundraising events in aid of general funds always include a Church Fête and a Christmas Fayre.

Our key aims, shared by the Methodists are:

Growing in Faith

A welcoming ancient building

Relating more closely to the Social Club, being an integral part of the community

Keeping a Focus on Wider Mission

Where We Are

Toft is a small village of 1285 acres, set astride the B1046, seven miles west of Cambridge with a population of about 600. Its southern boundary is Bourn Brook. Housing is mixed in size and type, and there are some council houses. Most houses are grouped in a rectangle made up of two roads, with a small housing estate to the north of the village green and a small separate group of houses adjacent to the Church, which does not stand in the heart of the village. There is a separate part of the Parish, which adjoins Comberton to the east, where the Village College is to be found. Opposite to the Village College is a new development of 90 houses, recently completed, known as Birdlings. However, the residents in this part do not naturally turn to Toft, but rather to Comberton.



It is an extremely active village with a wide variety of clubs, and a busy social life centred on the People's Hall, where a Social Club with bar runs four times a week. There are music evenings, quizzes, gigs, indoor bowls, and every Wednesday a community café and toddler group. The People's Hall can transform into a cinema, about once a month, and a theatre. The People's Hall was created from the School building (closed 1959). It has undergone a major re-build and now has two rooms upstairs, a good-sized hall, fully equipped kitchen and the Social Club downstairs.

There is a Post Office, a fish and chip/Chinese take away; a small area of light industry in the centre of the village, a small group of firms on the eastern edge of the village; and a number of businesses run from people's homes. The majority of people work away from the village in Cambridge, London, Bedford and Peterborough and there is quite a high number of retired people. Much of Toft is listed as a conservation area where development is strictly controlled to ensure that any changes are in keeping with the existing rural character of the village. In addition, Toft's low level of service provision means that it is classified for "infill" development only in areas within the village framework. There is a strong farming influence. The Cambridge Meridian Golf Club can be found on former farmland and occupies about one sixth of the village acreage. Toft Wood stands on the edge of the village.



St Andrew's Church, Toft

Children: few in number. There is no Primary School in the village. The majority of primary age go to the Meridian School, Comberton. Secondary education is largely provided by Comberton Village College situated on the eastern edge of Toft Parish. A number of children go to schools in Cambridge, mostly privately. Within the village there are a number of voluntary groups including Guiding (Scouting is available in villages all around). Young musicians are encouraged. There is a well-equipped recreation ground.

Elderly: *Home Meadow* in the centre of the village; originally a Social Services home it is now in private ownership. The bulk of those working there come from outside the village. Our minister visits at least once a month

There is no surgery in the village, but two Doctor's practices are available, one based in Bourn and the other in Comberton. Both surgeries offer a wide range of health-care services, and both have their own dispensaries. The nearest dentist is in Comberton.

Our Partnership with Toft Methodist Church

This is, without doubt, one of the most important aspects of our Christian life in Toft. Whoever is appointed will become a Methodist Minister with the right to administer in the Methodist Church.

St Andrew's Parish Church and Toft Methodist Chapel, two quite separate institutions, neither of whose viability was in question, grew together in friendship over many years. The signing of a Covenant in May 1999 publicly sealed this friendship, and the signing of a Declaration of Intent in November 2003 created our Local Ecumenical Partnership. We are the Church in Toft. Our Covenant, which seems to us to express exactly what we are about is as follows:

We Christians, members of Toft Methodist Church and St Andrew's Church of England, responding to God's call to be one in Christ, hereby pledge ourselves as our first priority to work together for the building up of Christ's Kingdom in Toft and beyond, by the following means:

- *Common worship on many occasions*
- *Sharing in activities for the building up of Christian fellowship*
- *Supporting one another's activities*
- *Welcoming mutual representation on governing bodies*
- *Sharing resources for all age Christian nurture*
- *Reviewing our progress annually*

We celebrate the richness of our own traditions, honour each other's and thank God for the unity we are discovering.

The points that follow demonstrates how our unity works.

- **Worship** - As stated above also includes the annual Methodist Covenant Service.
- **Fellowship** - There is much friendship between individual members of the two congregations and specific co-ordinated activity for special events and mutual support with fundraising events. The Methodists are, and have been, outstanding in their help with church fundraising.
- **Nurture** - There are joint groups held in someone's home encouraging conversation and exchange.
- **Mission** - Both congregations share a concern for the village of Toft and the residents at *Home Meadow*. In 2023 a Warm Hub was started on Mondays throughout the winter months which has proved incredibly successful.
- The number of people drawn from outside the village is greater amongst the Methodists than Anglicans. Members of both congregations support the Women's Refuge in Cambridge, CBMUK and there are collection points for food in both churches and the shop.
- **Ministry** - An Ecumenical Ministry Team (EMT) group meets three times a year to develop services, worship and local courses. A Partnership Enabling group (PEG) meets annually to consider if the LEP is fulfilling its mission. The Vicar and Minister co-operate frequently in pastoral care, running of special services, conducting of funerals and marriages. An Awayday takes place occasionally. Both the Methodist Minister and the Team Vicar are non-resident in the parish and have responsibilities for other congregations outside Toft.



Procession to celebrate 10 years of the LEP

- Buildings - The two buildings are both principally places of worship, quite separately administered and with independent legal status, but some use is made of each by the other congregation. In addition to regular acts of worship, the Church has been used by Methodists for weddings and funerals and the chapel by Anglicans. The Anglicans also use the Methodist new room for meetings. The Methodists have always been generous in offering their Church to both the Anglicans and the village for a variety of uses.
- Church Councils - Both churches send representatives to the other Churches Council meetings and this has proved of immense benefit to all.
- Churchyard - Methodist members of Toft parish are buried, if that is their choice, in the churchyard at St Andrew's.
- Finances - These are quite separate.



Firelight and Starlight Carol Service at St Andrew's, Toft

11. The Rectory

Comberton Rectory is a spacious four-bedroom home situated in a quiet cul-de-sac in the centre of the village and is in walking distance of the church and all other village amenities. Cambridge is nearby and accessible by bus.

The property has a private driveway and rear garden. There is a separate garage with storage space above. The downstairs study/office is situated in an annex accessible from within the house and has a separate front door and entrance hall from the exterior.



The Rectory



The Kitchen



Living Room



Dining Room



The Study



Master Bedroom

12. Bourn Deanery

Lordsbridge is part of the Bourn deanery which, as well as the Lordsbridge Team, consists of the Papworth Team Ministry and Cambourne Church, a four-way ecumenical partnership in a nearby new settlement. The Ven Hugh McCurdy, a retired archdeacon is our Rural Dean. Because of the unusual make-up of the deanery, deanery meetings other than synod are rare. The Rural Dean provides support for the Deanery Chapter and aids communication between the diocese and the parishes.

There are two large new settlements planned within the deanery. One is an extension of 2350 houses to Cambourne (an existing new town) to the west and the other is a self-contained settlement of 3500 houses on an old airfield, known as Bourn airfield, on the northwest boundary of the Lordsbridge Team. There are further new housing developments, on a smaller scale, within some of the Lordsbridge villages.

The diocese has started a Deanery Planning exercise linked to the Living Ely 2025 documentation. Full details of this can be found on the Diocesan website: www.elydiocese.org. The Diocese of Ely recognizes the importance of good relationships with clergy and laity, and places an emphasis on well-being. Bishop's Study Days and CME grants provide opportunities for clergy to meet together and continue to develop their knowledge and skills.

13. And Finally...

We asked some of the children and young people in our Team for their thoughts on what our new Team Rector should be like. In their own words:

A leader should be someone who can preach well. They should have a good sense of music and be open to different types of music in the church. A Team Rector should make each church feel considered and that they matter. They should make churches fun and sociable. It is important they value children's work and working with WCCYM to support young people. Older people and younger people should be included equally. We want someone who is funny and nice but serious when they need to be.

West of Cambridge
Churches Joint Service at
Comberton Leisure

