



The Parish of St John the Baptist, Frome, is seeking a new Parish Priest.



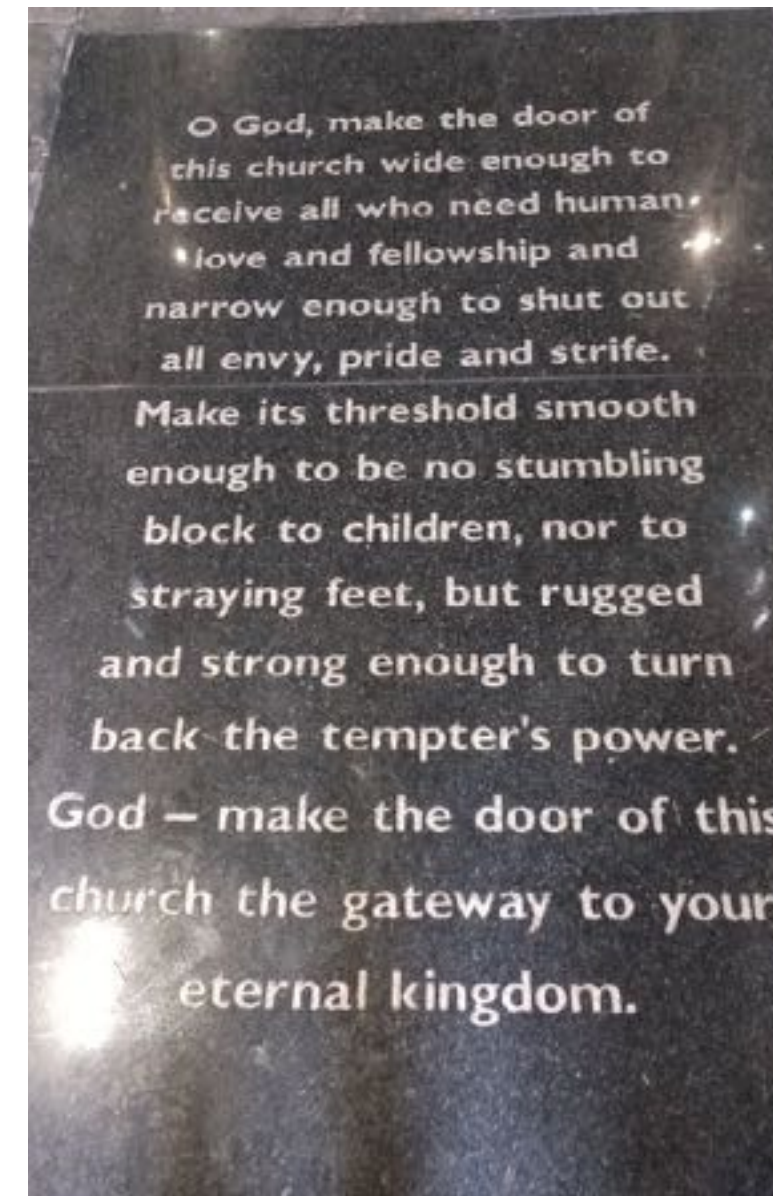


We are proud of the long tradition of Christian worship at St John's, which can be traced back to our foundation, and that of the town of Frome, by St Aldhelm in AD685. Among the loyal members of our congregation there is a sense of joy as we worship together; we celebrate the changing liturgical seasons through our long-held traditions such as decorating the church with young birch branches at Pentecost, and enjoying strawberries and cream on our Patronal Festival. The local school children participate in our annual well-dressing, a civic service, when we are joined by the town band and dignitaries as we bless the water courses that flow through our medieval streets.

"O God, make the door of this Church wide enough to receive all who need human love and fellowship, and narrow enough to shut out all envy, pride, and strife. Make its threshold smooth enough to be no stumbling block to children, nor to straying feet, but rugged and strong enough to turn back the tempter's power. God - make the door of this church the gateway to your eternal kingdom"
Amen

This prayer stone of Bishop Thomas Ken, who is buried at the east end of our church, welcomes our many visitors:

- ❖ Those seeking a quiet place for prayer and reflection
- ❖ The punters who browse our book stall and enjoy coffee and cake at one of our monthly mini-markets
- ❖ The Frome Festival-goers admiring the exquisite floral art while attending concerts and lectures
- ❖ The school children and their families who fill the church at their end of term services





We have been consulting with our own congregation, the local community, the other churches and their priests, to identify the challenges faced by the residents of Frome. We held an open meeting, **Seeking God's Way**, which was attended by church members and community representatives, at which we identified some of the main challenges facing us as we enter the next chapter of our history.

In our church we are aware that we are not getting any younger and we are keen to engage with the next generation who will continue the voice of prayer. How can we grow our Christian presence and develop partnerships with other agencies in the town to support the vulnerable and needy, that they too might find comfort in God's loving kindness? How can we welcome more people into our Christian family, especially those who are new to our town?

Frome may appear in many "Best places to live" lists but it is not without its problems. Poverty, loneliness and lack of youth opportunity are some of our concerns. Large new housing developments have been built, but lack community facilities. Enthusiastic entrepreneurs become disillusioned when they are unable to grow their businesses; their gifts and creativity need better commercial foundations if they are to flourish.



We need help if we are to fulfil our aspiration of being

"A Community Space with a Spiritual Heart"



Seven whole days, not one in seven

How can we fulfil our dream of becoming a community space with a spiritual heart?
How can we realise some of the dreams we shared at our **Seeking God's Way** meeting?



1. Can we offer a safe space for those struggling with the stress of everyday life?



Cherishing our inheritance of Christian faith and worship

We sense a growing Christian spirituality in our town: increased cooperation between the different Christian churches in town through the work of Frome Area Christians Together has seen more lay-led services in our hospital and care-homes. We look forward to working ever more closely with the other Christian groups in Frome.



2. What can we do to be more involved with our local schools?



We welcome all and share the joy of the gospel message in Christ

We are exploring ways of engaging with the many people who already use our building for private prayer and reflection. In recent months we have welcomed several new people into our congregation, and as an Inclusive Church we are keen that all should know the warmth and comfort of God's love.



3. How long will it be before we can significantly reduce our carbon footprint?



Through concern for the wholeness of individuals and active involvement in community life in all its diversity

Following our inspiring consultation meeting we are developing partnerships with other agencies in the town and seeking ways to support those who are trying to build their spiritual and commercial lives in Frome.

What we offer



- ❖ An enthusiastic team which includes: an active PCC, two church wardens, an experienced lay-reader and a reader-in-training (to be licensed in 2025), a part-time administrator who shares an office with one of the other benefices in the town, and many hard-working and willing disciples.
- ❖ A Grade II* listed building full of prayer, parts of which date back to our Saxon foundation by St Aldhelm.
- ❖ Stained glass windows, decorative roundels and a unique external via crucis, all of which contribute to telling the gospel story.
- ❖ The opportunity to be part of the new Deanery vision, in which the 4 Anglican churches will be served by 3 autonomous priests who have an appetite for working closely together.
- ❖ Our church school, a VA first school with 220 children aged 4 – 8.
- ❖ The Bennett Centre, adjacent to the church, which is regularly used by over 200 people a week of all ages. Activities include singing, board gaming, book groups, church meetings. On a Sunday morning the Christian Fellowship worships there.
- ❖ The Cottage, which, in addition to providing administrative office space shared with Christ Church/St Mary's, also houses Focus, a counselling service.
- ❖ A vicarage offering spacious living accommodation, situated in a secluded location within 5 minutes' walk of the church and town centre.

Is this you?



We hope our next Vicar will be:

- An experienced minister, blessed with the gifts of strong leadership.
- Someone with a pioneering vision, able to work harmoniously with the other priests in our town and across the Deanery.
- A leader who will increase the faith of the Church, dispersing the doubts and fears that hold us back from complete trust in the Lord.
- A person of vision who will discern, develop and deploy the gifts of others.
- An inclusive and welcoming person who will engage with our school and local families to build a thriving congregation for the future.
- Someone who enjoys their ministry, who listens with empathy and compassion, and who has the wisdom to heal divisions among all Christians, making us all of one heart and soul in faith to proclaim the power of the Resurrection.



Do you feel called?

- To join us on our journey as we work together, building on our existing strengths and cultural heritage to spread the good news of Christ working in our town?
- We are eager to meet you and look forward to welcoming you into our Christian family.



Some of our congregation outside the church with Acting Archdeacon of Bath & Wells, Charlie Peer

"Go, therefore and make disciples of all nations (Matt 28:19)



Service Timetable

Weekly on Sunday:	8.45am Morning service via Zoom
	9.45am Parish Communion (Common Worship)
First Saturday of the month:	9.00am United prayers (FACT Frome Area Christians Together)
Last Tuesday of the month:	11.00am Julian meeting

2023 Figures

Number on electoral roll	77
Number attending on a usual Sunday	38
Number of baptisms	5
Number of weddings	9 (unusually high – generally 4 or 5 per annum)
Number of funerals	9



Finance (FY23)

	General Fund	Bennett Centre	Church Cottage	Legacy Fund	Printing account
Planned giving total	£19,386				
Parish Share request	£30,909				
Parish Share paid	78%				
Restricted reserves	£11,938	£7449			
Unrestricted reserves	£12,905	£5735	£3991	£66,003	£3326



Parish share: Although we have a generous congregation, it is a small one and it has become challenging in recent years to pay our full Parish Share. We have achieved this in six of the past eight years but not in 2021 (partly covid related) and 2023 (78%). We are working hard to pay the full amount this year and are also aware that the Share request in 2025 is likely to be considerably higher.

Quinquennial report: Issued Oct 2023. The Churchwardens and PCC were congratulated on the level of maintenance undertaken and condition of this 'large and complex' Grade II* listed building. The quinquennial identified leadwork roof repairs and glass replacement as high priority issues to address. The Churchyard is closed under regulations and is the responsibility of Somerset Council.

Buildings

Church building Grade II*. Website: <https://www.stjohnsfrome.com>

Other Listed Structures: Via Crucis; Wyattville Screen; War Memorial; Bennett Memorial

Bennett Centre (Church Hall). Website: <https://www.bennettcentre.com>

Church Cottage (including Church Office & Ashby Rooms) Houses FOCUS Frome (a counselling service) and the administrative office for St John's and Christ Church / St Mary's.

School: St John's CE VA School. Website: <https://www.stjohnsfrome.co.uk>

Affiliations

Christ Church and St Mary's: <https://www.christchurch-stmarys-frome.co.uk>

Holy Trinity: <https://www.holytrinityfrome.com>

FACT – Frome Area Christians Together: <https://www.fromeareachristianstogether.com>

Inclusive Church: <https://www.inclusive-church.org>

Major Churches Network – <https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/diocesan-resources/strategic-planning-church-buildings/major-parish-churches>

Eco-church: www.ecochurch.arochoa.org.uk



Deanery Statement

Welcome to Frome Deanery.

Working as Christians together across the Deanery we seek to be a Transforming Christian presence in every community where more and more people catch God's love and choose to be Jesus's disciples. In vacancy I have been delighted to attend the community wide Seeking God's Way event. In talking with and praying with some of the parishes representatives, I believe that there is a real heart to work together across the whole town of Frome, crossing parish boundaries and denominations. This will enable the embracing of new opportunities, as St John's seeks to be welcoming and hospitable to the new people moving into Frome as well as still honouring the faithfulness of the existing congregation.

We would expect the new incumbent to link in with the shared Deanery wide vision for working across the Deanery: to catalyse, release and enable work amongst children, families and young people.

We as a Deanery, seek to give God the glory and draw people to Christ in all that we do, with clergy and non-clergy alike, sharing in building God's kingdom in ways that are affirming and energising for all involved.

We see ourselves as a pioneering Deanery returning to the values of the early church as described in Acts 2:41-47 – fellowship based on love and prayer.

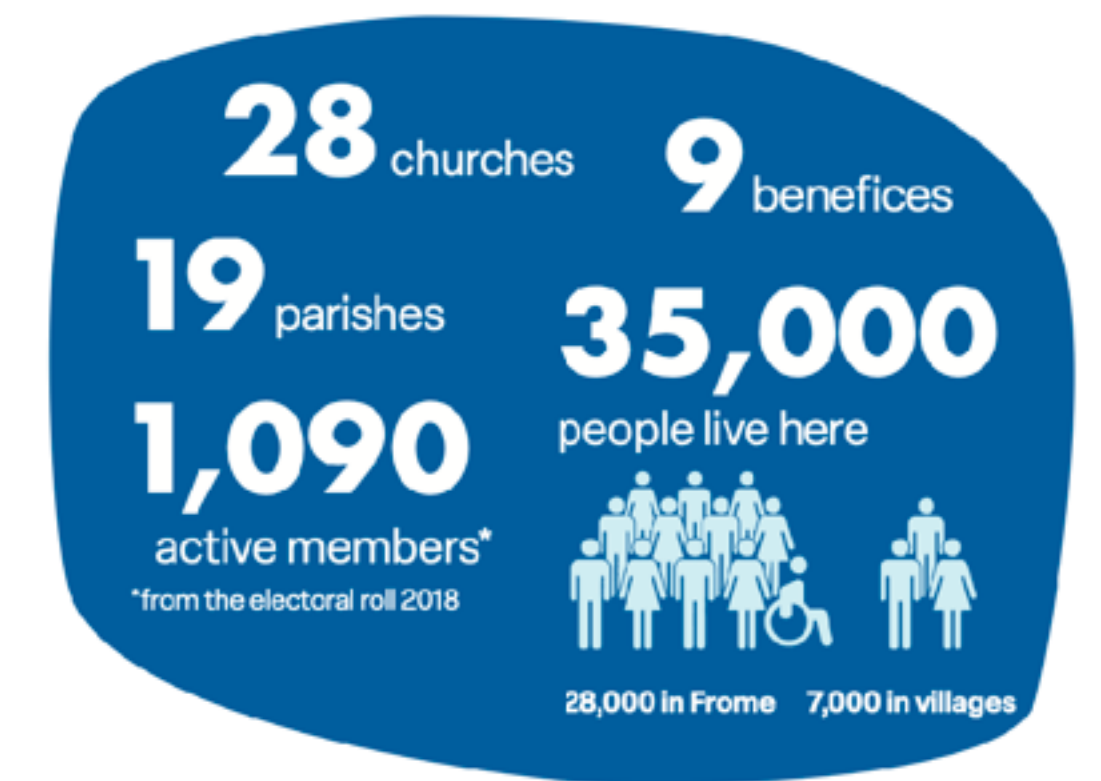
This is all underpinned by four strands

Planning - which is fundamental to making our vision succeed

Resourcing - so that initiatives are cross-deanery and include both the rural and the town churches working together

Communicating - sharing our successes and struggles, supporting each other and using social media to communicate well with the wider community

Supporting - we appreciate that our vision is challenging, but we are confident that that we can succeed if we have the right mind set and support each other.



Revd Caroline Walker

Area Dean

Rector of Hardington Vale

Diocesan Statement

We are delighted that you are considering whether this post of Vicar of the Benefice of Frome St John in the Diocese of Bath and Wells might be right for you. In order to help your prayerful discernment, we want to share a bit about our diocesan vision, within which we hope your own ministry might flourish.

Appointing a priest incumbent is amongst the most significant decisions that any benefice makes. When appointments work out well, they contribute significantly to parishes flourishing and growing in a host of different ways – in spiritual depth, in impact within local communities and in the numbers of people becoming part of the local church. Such flourishing is not, of course, all down to the person appointed as priest. It depends first and foremost upon God. It also depends upon everyone in a benefice being willing and able to contribute their unique gifts, skills, resources and abilities: working alongside their priest and sharing in the ministry of the benefice.

The flourishing and growth of churches always needs attention, but especially now as we come out of the shock created by the COVID pandemic. The impact of the pandemic created a sharp acceleration in the pattern of decline in church attendance that has been seen in our diocese over many years. Thankfully there are some signs that we are recovering from the COVID decline. For example, data showed that average adult weekly church attendance in our diocese rose between 2021 and 2022. Statistics only ever tell a partial story. It is even more encouraging to see churches around our diocese developing approaches that respond to the opportunities and challenges in their local context and enable growth to happen.



A vision for growth and transformation

Our diocesan context, described above, has convinced us that for our next season at least, our aim across all our parishes needs to be growing our churches, within and beyond our church buildings, in both numbers and depth of faith, so that we can better work for the transforming of our communities and the life of God's Kingdom amongst us.

Shared priorities

To help us pursue this aim, and following consultation across the diocese in 2023, we are inviting all parishes to focus on four particular areas of our ministry together. It is important for clergy considering working in our diocese to know what these priorities are, even though what they look like in practice will vary in each place.

To value and cherish the people and resources we already have	We aim to ensure each person is well supported and equipped as a follower of Jesus Christ and for any ministries they may feel called to undertake, within the local church and wider community. We are committed to supporting the well-being of all our leaders and church officers, both lay and ordained. We have a fully funded clergy well-being service, the offer of peer support groups, and an excellent team of Diocesan support staff fully focused on supporting our parishes, chaplaincies and schools.
To develop new Christian worshipping communities	Whether it be new forms of worship in a wide variety of settings and times, church revitalisations or church plants, we long to see the good news of Jesus connect with the people in our communities that our traditional offerings struggle to reach.
To share in ministry and leadership	We are committed to the New Testament vision of the church as a vibrant body of people all using their God-given gifts. We are committed to a model of shared local ministry: raising up and equipping lay and ordained leaders able to share together in leading the church and serving God's world.
To deepen and grow faith	This is foundational to all we do. We long to see people of all ages and backgrounds, but perhaps especially children, young people and young adults, having more opportunities to discover, explore and grow in faith.

The outcome we are looking for

When he talks about his own ministry in 1 Corinthians, Paul captures the dynamic we are seeking to achieve. "I planted," he says, "Apollos watered, but God gave the growth"(1 Cor 3: 6). We know that our churches will only flourish and grow as a result of God's action among us – it is God who gives the growth.

But Paul is also clear that we have a part to play too – in watering and planting, in doing the things that enable the conditions for God's growth to be supported. So, covered by prayer, our confident hope is that if we are intentional in seeking God's guidance in planning and supporting growth, then God will honour that to see his people flourish and thrive - in spiritual depth, in impact within local communities, in the numbers of people becoming part of the local church and in transforming communities locally and beyond.

Local shaping and diocesan support

There can't be any 'one size fits' all approach to turning the priorities outlined above into action. They always need to be adapted to local circumstances, opportunities and needs. The task of our diocesan support services is to get behind all that local benefices are doing and apart from their general support, there is specific support for exploring how to grow new Christian communities, how to discern and equip a growing range of ministries in your context and how to work well with children and young people. All these areas of support are grounded in exploring what it means to live out our faith.

What implications does this have for the appointment of clergy?

It is important for us all to appoint clergy to benefices who are ready, willing and able to pray for and share in the vision we have for the flourishing and growth of churches and Christian life in our diocese. We want to create an environment that could be described as high challenge, high support. This means appointing clergy who will not only value all that already exists but will be eager to work with others to build on and develop it. It means appointing clergy who are committed to learning, being creative, and to starting with the gifts God has given to them, their benefice and the wider community. We are therefore looking to appoint candidates who will

- be committed to praying and intentionally seeking the growth and flourishing of the benefices in their care
- relish and expect to work in an environment that is high challenge, high support
- work joyfully and collaboratively with those who share with them locally in ministry and leadership, with their congregations and with others in their locality, to identify ways to grow and develop their churches with the grain of local priorities, resources, skills and passions
- enjoy working in partnership with deanery and diocesan colleagues.

We hope this might be you! We hope that you'd like to join us on the adventure and course we've set for our next ten years. We're praying that God will send us the right labourers for the harvest that God has set before us. Could this be you?

+ Michael. *Charles*



This church has stood prominently in the heart of this popular market town for over a thousand years. With loyal and supportive disciples we work closely with other Christian congregations to serve our community.

We are seeking an experienced minister with a pioneering vision to join us on our journey, building on our existing strengths and cultural heritage to spread the good news of Christ working in our town.

Could you lead this mission?

www.stjohnsfrome.com

www.bathandwells.org

